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Southern Missions

The Religion of the
American South in
Global Perspective

Charles Reagan Wilson

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Southern Missions

In 1975 Dr. E. Bud Edmondson of Longview, Texas, began an endowment fund at Baylor University to honor his father, Mr. Charles S. B. Edmondson. Dr. Edmondson's intent was to have the proceeds from the fund used to bring to the University outstanding historians who could synthesize, interpret, and communicate history in such a way as to make the past relevant to the present generation.

Baylor University and the Waco community are grateful to Dr. Edmondson for his generosity in establishing the CHARLES EDMONDSON HISTORICAL LECTURES.

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Preface

I was honored to be asked to deliver the twenty-eighth Charles Edmondson Historical Lectures at Baylor University, March 7-8, 2006. The list of previous lecturers is most distinguished company to keep, and Baylor has long played a significant role as a beacon of intellectual life, especially for those interested in religion in the American South. I appreciated the hospitality of the faculty and staff, especially those in the Department of History, and particularly my host, Julie Sweet.

The thesis of these lectures is that the global connections of southern religion reflect more than disconnected individual episodes; they point to an ongoing tradition within the American South that historians have previously failed to examine in its breadth. This study sweeps from the religious diversity of the colonial South to the contemporary migration into the South of ethnic groups and their religious traditions, which were previously little known in the region. It highlights the continuing significance of African religions and their African-American descendants as a global connection in the South. Examination of the Atlantic world context proves relevant to clarifying the relationships among evangelical Protestants in the American South, other areas of the United States, and Britain. Perhaps most notably, gender emerges as a key analytical category for understanding the global reach of religion in the nineteenth-century American South. These lectures will hopefully point other historians to more seriously engaging the issue of missionary work as an important topic, not just in denominational history but the region's religious history in general.

The contemporary period has heard much discussion of globalization, with scholars giving most attention to issues of economic development in a world system and transnational migration and communication. I hope these lectures contribute to the discussion of globalization in the South and illuminate religion's function as a force working out the cultural effects of globalization on local communities and places. The South's distinctive regional culture has been transformed in the process, helping to shape a new religious culture that is emerging. These lectures provide historical context for understanding the dramatic impact of globalization on the American South.

Charles Reagan Wilson

Lecture 1

Southern Religion, the Atlantic World, and Beyond

"The call of the South in religious service is measured by what God in his providential leadings has given the South." So wrote Victor I. Masters of the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board in his 1918 book, *The Call of the South*. Masters noted that "more than any other part of the country, the South has a sectional consciousness," which was the result of living through the trials, deprivations, griefs, and sufferings of the Civil War and its aftermath. The result had been the nurturing of a distinct regional spirituality. "Its consciousness of its own pains and sorrows, of the gallantry and chivalry of its sons, of its mistakes and sufferings, of its superiority to the worst calamities which came to it, of its ability to build a civilization out of ashes, makes the present South worth far more both to the nation and to itself." He urged southerners to "treasure the lessons of the history of our section" and "to conserve the spiritual dynamic with which God has equipped us for building in our own section a great Christian civilization." Moreover, the South, with its peculiar spiritual history, would contribute to bringing salvation to the nation and the world.¹

Masters thus outlined a notable religious destiny for a specifically "southern" religion. This vision was rooted in an American sense of destiny going back to the Puritan image of the "city on a hill" in North America, but Masters could easily draw from a century of writing, preaching, and praying by southern religious leaders about the South's

¹ Victor I. Masters, *The Call of the South* (Atlanta: Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1918), 17–18.

distinctive religious experience. Most notably, religious leaders had seen the Confederate States of America as a crusade in a holy war, and thus they subsequently had to come to terms with how one loses a holy war. The answer they gave was that the loss in the Civil War was a test from God, preparing the South for a greater destiny in the future. The religion of the Lost Cause, with its saints like Robert E. Lee and its martyrs like Stonewall Jackson, reflected a nineteenth-century confidence that the South had a special destiny because it represented the last beachhead of true religion in the Western world. By "true religion" they generally meant evangelical Protestantism. Masters was a leader of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), yet he called his book *The Call of the South*, not *The Call of the SBC*. Though he was writing several generations after the defeat of the Confederacy, it was a vivid cultural memory that he saw as especially meaningful in his own time; 1918 was a key moment for southern religion's role in the world. The southern church faithful had championed Woodrow Wilson's crusade for world democracy. It was no wonder, as Wilson was one of their own. The son, grandson, and nephew of leading southern Presbyterian ministers, and himself raised in Presbyterian parsonages across the South, Wilson projected southern righteousness onto the world stage. At the same time, religious leaders in the South came to reconsider the challenges and opportunities of their own work, rooted in region but reaching beyond the South to the conversion of the world.²

That moment in time is an entryway in looking at the religion of the American South from a global perspective. This topic is a timely one, as we live in an age when talk of globalization is pervasive. Analysts of the concept of globalization have looked most closely at its economic and social ramifications, involving growth of transnational business connections, international labor migrations, emergence of new communication links worldwide, and the effects of such dramatic and swift change on existing communities. Peter Beyer and other scholars have explored the issue of religion's role in globalization, looking mostly at the period since the 1970s, the years during which most observers would see a distinctive globalization emerging. Their work focuses on the effects of globalization on world religions and the emergence of a new global context for religion in general. Scholars have so far failed

² Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865–1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 77–78, 176–80.

to examine closely the relationship of regionalism, religion, and the global context, which is the broad focus of these lectures. Historians, economists, and others have begun looking at globalization and the South, with two conferences on that topic having taken place in the last two years. Neither conference included a paper on religion, and the topic is virtually unexplored from that perspective. Scholars of the American South, Charles Reagan Wilson included, have heretofore devoted little attention to seeing how southern religion looks when the context is broadened beyond the South itself and beyond even the North-South context that has framed most discussions of the development of religion in the American South.³

The first lecture will focus upon the theme of the South's emergence on the world stage, examining the context of the Atlantic world of early southern history, the distinctiveness of evangelical Protestantism in the South and its nevertheless complex ties with transatlantic evangelicalism, the significance of foreign missions, and the effects of televangelism as an international technological extension of aspects of southern evangelicalism. The second lecture will focus upon the theme of the world coming to the South—including the role of Catholicism and Judaism in the historical South—the coming of world religions to the South in larger numbers with the increased immigration of the post-1960s period, and the response of traditional southern religion to these changes. Throughout, the underlying issue that we will return to is how a particular religious tradition, so deeply rooted in culture as evangelical Protestantism is in the American South, has functioned in the global world, both in the past and in the present. When we look at the South in a global context, rather than the more usual North-South American context, does the region's religious exceptionalism stand out, or are its commonalities with other places more significant? The

³ Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalization* (London: Sage Publications, 1994). The proceedings from two recent conferences on globalization and the South provide a useful introduction: James L. Peacock, Harry L. Watson, and Carrie R. Matthews, *The American South in a Global World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); James C. Cobb and William Stueck, *Globalization and the American South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005). See also David Goldfield, "The Impact of Globalization on the American South: Culture, Ecology, and Economy," in *Which "Global Village"? Societies, Cultures, and Political-Economic Systems in a Euro-American Perspective*, ed. Valeria Gennaro Lerda (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002), 145–54; and James Peacock, "The South in a Global World," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 78 (2002): 581–94.

religious tradition that has dominated the American South in the last two centuries is evangelical Protestantism, and we will look at that tradition as an interdenominational one. Given the pervasive role of Southern Baptists in the region, examples of larger points will often be found in that group's experience. The bigger issue is the relationship between universalism, as represented by globalism, and particularism, as represented by regionalism. In our global-regional journey, we will roam around time periods, places, denominations, and public and private religion, symbolically freeing what we call "southern" religion from the usual spatial and temporal boundaries commentators have imposed upon it.

The story begins not with the evangelical Protestantism that came to dominate the South in the nineteenth century, but with the role of religion in the colonial South, which was formed as an expression of an early modern expansion by the new nations of Europe into the Americas. The southern colonies emerged as a site in the Atlantic world that connected Europe, Africa, and the Americas, leading to the transfer of social and cultural institutions to the Western Hemisphere and continued interaction across several centuries—interaction that sometimes underwent profound disruptions but established fundamental connections between old worlds and new ones. As with contemporary globalization, capitalism drove this early modern global expansion, but religion played a key role. Recent historiography argues for a transatlantic focus as a foundation for reconceptualizing early American religious history, and the South's central role in the plantation economy that was a major link in the Atlantic world moves southern religion into a more central role in gaining an understanding of American religious history.⁴

Seeing colonial religion in a global context impels us to move beyond the traditional focus of southern religious studies on the Protestantism of the English colonies and bring Spanish and French religious work into the picture, in order to understand more fully the origins of religion in the territory that would become the American South. Religion was a part of the rivalry between European powers in North America, and Spanish missionaries accompanied explorers moving through the Gulf South and the Southwest, helping to found

⁴ Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianization of the American People* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990); D. W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History: Atlantic America, 1492–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

the early settlements in Florida. Missions in Texas became prime symbols that this global expansion rested ideologically on conversion of the natives, as well as on economic exploitation of New World resources. The French colony of Louisiana similarly saw the Catholic church working to convert natives and to serve as an outpost of a French civilization that had a prominent religious presence. The colonial era also saw the beginnings of long-standing cultural ties between south Louisiana and the Caribbean, with implications that included the ongoing presence of African religious influences through the antebellum era. Historical geography increasingly sees cultural hearths in the Chesapeake, the Carolinas, and the frontier backcountry, but also along the Spanish and French Catholic Gulf Coast, which established early cultural and religious patterns that later settlers assimilated.⁵

The nineteenth-century South would come to be the most culturally isolated part of the United States, but the colonial South embodied a diverse religious context, growing out of the South's pivotal role in the Atlantic world economy. The Protestant Reformation was one of the profound changes that helped bring about modernity, and it shaped the sense of mission that English colonists brought with them. As Perry Miller long ago noted, the southern colonists were part of the "errand into the wilderness"; Anglican clerics in the seventeenth-century colonial South were often deeply imbued with reformist beliefs and instituted a legal code in their colonies embodying as strict a regimen of religious observance as that in New England. On the other hand, magic and the occult remained deeply embedded parts of European folk culture, and these attitudes were also transferred to the southern colonies. Globalization today is marked by the flow of migrants and refugees around the world, and this early Atlantic globalization saw major social groups of religious dissenters leaving Europe for new beginnings. Quakers, Mennonites, French Huguenots, Moravians, and Presbyterians were all constituent elements of a religiously diverse colonial South. The religious context also included Roman Catholics (with Maryland formed as a Catholic refuge) and Jews (who established some of the earliest North American synagogues in Charleston and Savannah). Native American

⁵ David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

tribes had their own religious traditions, which were very much a part of the context for southern colonists into the eighteenth century.⁶

The colonial South represented a time before a self-conscious "southern" identity emerged, but the social and cultural ingredients for a distinctive regional civilization had appeared by the 1700s, with the presence of African slaves another key outgrowth of the South's role in the Atlantic world economy. Africans brought with them to the New World religious practices now called African Traditional Religion, which appeared as separate systems in differing African societies but had a common worldview that typically included a High God and a host of deities and lesser spirits active in daily life. This worldview emphasized the importance of kinship bonds that united the living and the dead and ritual magic that could influence making decisions, maintaining health, and dealing with adversaries. Historians see much of that system surviving in the Caribbean Islands and, to a much lesser degree, in the southern mainland colonies. Recent scholarship has looked at the issue of early African religion in the southern colonies by going back to Africa. In addition to African Traditional Religion, Africanized Islam was another tradition brought to the New World, and we now know that the conversion of Africans to Christianity began in Africa and was an ongoing process in the passage to the Americas. Sylvia Frey and Betty Wood, in their comparative study of African religion in the Caribbean and the southern colonies, conclude that slaves could not recreate their traditional systems; but "what they were able to do, and often very successfully, was to piece together new systems from the remnants of the old." This became one paradigm of adapting Old World religion into a new synthesis in the global Atlantic world, achieved under extraordinarily turbulent social and psychological conditions. Gradually, Africans in the southern colonies came to accept Christian eschatology, while emerging white evangelicals were surely influenced by the possibilities of religious ecstasy, the sense of a spirit journey, and the close ties between this world and the afterlife that were typical of African

⁶ Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1956); H. Tyler Blethen, Curtis W. Wood Jr., and Jack W. Weaver, eds., *Ulster and North America: Transatlantic Perspectives on the Scotch Irish* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997); Daniel B. Thorp, *The Moravian Community in Colonial North Carolina: Pluralism on the Southern Frontier* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989); Jon Butler, *The Huguenots in America: A Refugee People in New World Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

Traditional Religion. Meanwhile, the emergence of a distinctive Afro-Protestant faith did not obliterate the memory of Africa. While Christianity provided the structure and broader perspective on religious issues of life and death, the African spiritual heritage offered ways of coping with such everyday problems as health, the natural world, and interpersonal relations within a hierarchical slave society.⁷

Evangelical Protestantism would come to include African Americans, but it was a relatively late arrival in the colonial South, beginning its rise from sectarian status in the late eighteenth century. Southern evangelicalism is a branch of the Christian family that has insisted that the most important aspect of Christianity is experiential. As Samuel S. Hill notes, the central theme of southern religious history was the search for conversion, for redemption from innate human depravity. A pronounced strain of Calvinism gave evangelicals a dim view of human nature and its proclivity for sin, but the evangelical's belief in direct access to God's grace modified this element, creating a religion aware of sin but also confident of the possibility of salvation. Conversion became the foundation for a new, transformed moral life. Mark Noll captures the centrality of the Scriptures to this tradition in referring to evangelical Protestantism's "experiential biblicism." The dynamic of evangelicalism in the South is thus nearly synonymous with conversion, and proselytizing became not one aspect of religion but the central concern of individuals and the church as a community. Evangelical groups exist in other parts of the United States, of course, and indeed in Great Britain and elsewhere. The distinctiveness of southern religion has been this overarching emphasis on conversion, on perfecting the mechanisms of revivalism and missionary work to carry out its mission. It has been distinctive within global evangelicalism because this tradition has been the dominant one in the region for so long—since the early nineteenth century—and its concern for

⁷ John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1680* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Mechal Sobel, *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979); Yvonne Chireau, *Black Magic: Dimensions of the Supernatural in African-American Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

moral and social orthodoxy has influenced southerners even beyond their own church doors.⁸

Frontier revivalism was the engine driving evangelical expansion, as represented especially by Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians. This story can be seen as taking place in the isolated rural backcountry, but it must also be placed in broader perspective. The Cotton Kingdom, for example, the term used to describe the spread of white pioneers, farmers, and their slaves into the Old Southwest areas from Georgia to Mississippi and west in the early nineteenth century, should be understood as not only the spread of peoples and cotton culture but also a site of global development. This movement of white settlers was into an area of long international competition among European powers, with notable Spanish and French influence remaining in parts of the territory. This land, moreover, was occupied by Native American tribes known as the Five Civilized Tribes. The development occurred in the same years that a self-conscious southern identity was emerging, around 1830 and afterwards, and at a time when evangelical Protestant groups were attaining a cultural coherence and influence that would lead to the dominance of their worldview in the South. And, of course, southern cotton was becoming ever more important in those years to the textile mills of England and New England.⁹

Emblematic of the consolidation of evangelical Protestantism as the South's hegemonic religion was the conversion of African-American slaves and Native Americans. Camp meetings and revivalism increased the visibility of this religion for slaves who were often a part

⁸ Samuel S. Hill, *Southern Churches in Crisis* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1967); John Boles, *The Great Revival, 1787-1805: The Origins of the Southern Evangelical Mind* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1972); Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (New York: Knopf, 1997). Quote is from Mark A. Noll, "Revolution and the Rise of Evangelical Social Influence in North Atlantic Society," in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, ed. Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 114.

⁹ Anne C. Loveland, *Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980); Randy J. Sparks, *On Jordan's Stormy Banks: Evangelicalism in Mississippi, 1773-1876* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994); David T. Bailey, *Shadow on the Church: Southwestern Evangelical Religion and the Issue of Slavery, 1783-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

of camp meetings and sometimes exhorted at them. Special plantation missions were established after 1830, reflecting evangelicalism's defining belief in conversion and promoting the slaves' familiarity with this version of Protestantism. Evangelicalism's individualistic, spiritually egalitarian message appealed to people in bondage, and baptism by water immersion, central to the Baptists, echoed ancient African rituals, reflecting a religious syncretism. Slaves often were members of biracial churches—the one time in southern history when blacks and whites worshipped together in significant numbers, praying together, singing together, taking communion together in a common, sacred space—and they helped give this religion of heart conversion an infusion of age-old African religious ecstasy. Slaves also found ways to combine Christian beliefs with praise services, creating the "invisible religion" of the slave quarters. In this way, African religion would influence the developing southern religion, both a common biracial southern style and a specifically African-American one, and leave a global stamp on the South's spirituality.¹⁰

Similarly, evangelical missionaries went among Native Americans in the early nineteenth century. As settlers moved into the Old Southwest, pressures mounted for the removal of Indians from their native lands. Traditional Indian religion had evolved through long contact with Christian missionaries, which had disrupted native societies and traumatized traditional religious identities. The spiritual cost of this culminating period of European-Native American contact in the early nineteenth century was seen in the appearance of a Cherokee Ghost Dance Movement (1811-1813), which produced apocalyptic visions that forecast the destruction of whites; but its failure proved a turning point in that tribe's history, as Christianity increasingly replaced traditional Indian worldviews among the southeastern tribes. Baptists first sent missionaries into the Cherokee Nation shortly after that, in 1819, with Methodist circuit riders appearing in late 1823. The evangelical stress on spiritual experience over doctrine, an informal worship ritual, the empowerment of Cherokees themselves as evangelists, and a congregationalist model of authority all promoted acceptance of Protestantism among the Cherokees and other southeastern tribes. When the

¹⁰ Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Religion" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); John B. Boles, *Masters and Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740-1870* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988).

federal government forced final removal of the Five Civilized Tribes to the Indian Territory in the 1830s, the Indians took forms of evangelical religion with them and planted them in what would become a border area of the South. The cotton traders of Europe were likely not paying attention to developments in this far away backcountry, but they soon would do so, as the Indians' removal opened the way for economic exploitation of the rich lands of the Deep South by spreading cotton culture.¹¹

The religious interaction of white evangelicals with blacks and Indians at a particular time and place, the early nineteenth century in the emerging Cotton Kingdom, was a key moment in the defining of a distinctive context that produced a particular version of evangelical Protestantism. The evangelicalism in the American South was, however, still a part of transatlantic evangelicalism, which provided the global context for its development from the eighteenth century into the twentieth. George Whitefield became an early celebrity revivalist, preaching in Britain and also up and down the East Coast of the North American colonies, including the southern settlements. These awakenings were grassroots outpourings, reflecting evangelicalism's abiding populist character; yet they often gave great authority to leaders with charisma or organizational ability. The visits of Whitefield, John Wesley, and other evangelicals to the colonies tied those regions of North America to transnational contexts in a defining era of evangelicalism's history. Networks of communication sustained the transatlantic nature of evangelicalism through voluntary associations, the influence of personalities, word-of-mouth publicity, books, journals, travelers' accounts, and hymns — forms that would abide as connecting links for evangelicalism into the twentieth century. Whitefield's successful promotion of revivalism in North America became a model of transnational religious communication, one that Billy Graham would one day adopt, with the New World now the exporter of religion to Europe, Asia, and other global locales.¹²

¹¹ William McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries, 1789–1839* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); William McLoughlin, with Walter H. Couser Jr. and Virginia Duffy McLoughlin, *The Cherokee Ghost Dance: Essays on the Southeastern Indians, 1789–1860* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1984).

¹² Frank Lambert, "Pedlar in Divinity": *George Whitefield and the Transatlantic Revivals, 1737–1770* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

Evangelicalism remained a transatlantic movement long after these early revivals. Although camp meetings give us a resonant American and southern image of the revival spirit, the British actually originated the tradition, and founded or made significant contributions not only to revivalism but to other such important aspects of nineteenth-century evangelicalism as the modern missionary movement, the YMCA, and many other agencies for moral and social reform. British and American evangelicals shared a vigorous Calvinist Reformed spirit of civic and political engagement, as opposed to a quietist separation from society, something that was true for Armenian Methodists as well as Baptists. By the mid-Victorian era, political activity in both places was moralized, and religious affiliation came to influence political loyalties.

Place-specific particularities must be taken into account to appreciate how localism, at the same time, influenced the development of different expressions of a broadly common transnational evangelicalism. In the United States, evangelicalism in the North emerged as a conversion-centered religion that led to transformed lives which included significant moral and social reform of the community. Anti-slavery activism was a prime expression of this sentiment, whereas, of course, the South's version of evangelicalism rested easy with either quarantining slavery as a matter of private life or positively justifying the institution as a social and even missionary good. After studying the role of evangelicals in the Civil War, Richard Carwardine concludes that "if we are looking for the profound aberration, or fault line, in the Atlantic world, it was not to be found in the distinctiveness of United States' evangelicalism compared with the experience of Britain and the Old World; rather, it was the exceptionalism of theologically and socially conservative southern evangelicals as against the advancing, postmillennialist anti-slavery culture of ambitious British and Yankee reformers." The reactions of northern American and British evangelicals to the moral arguments in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* showed their similar mindsets, as compared to the reactions of the morally wounded and defensive evangelicals of the South.¹³

¹³ Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and North America, 1790–1865* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978); George Marsden, "Fundamentalism as an American Phenomenon: A Comparison with English Evangelicals," *Church History* 46 (1977): 215–32.

Evangelicalism had always included a conservative approach to the Scriptures, and in the late nineteenth century this outlook would gradually emerge more clearly defined in response to the end of evangelicalism's hegemonic role in Britain and much of the United States—though not in the South. Early twentieth-century fundamentalism tells a story of international Atlantic cultural ties that produced a new religious movement, but one with only a limited and distinctively southern expression. This movement began around 1900 among conservative Protestants, mostly in the northern United States, who were worried about liberal theology, the social gospel, Darwinian evolution, and the secularization of culture. Revivalist Dwight L. Moody, who operated out of the Midwest, was a key figure in the late nineteenth-century beginnings of the movement, at the center of an interdenominational revivalist network that included revival agencies, prophetic conferences, Bible schools, student organizations, publications, and contacts with local churches representing many denominations. His preaching emphasized the love of God and did not favor the hellfire and brimstone tone of much earlier American revivalism, reflecting a softening of the earlier predominant Calvinist sensibility in American revivalism. The fundamentalist movement led to organizations like the World's Christian Fundamentals Association and the seminal publication of twelve booklets, collectively titled *The Fundamentals*, which appeared from 1909 to 1915.¹⁴

Fundamentalism reflected the continuing transatlantic contacts between Britain and the United States. Indeed, Ian S. Rennie argues that "twentieth-century American fundamentalism had its roots in nineteenth-century British evangelicalism." Moody himself was a key link. He preached revivals in Britain in the 1870s, even igniting a national awakening in Scotland, that made Moody and his song leader, Ira Sankey, international religious figures. Two of the key influences on the American Fundamentalist movement had both American and British origins. The first, dispensational premillennialism, proposed the sharp division of history into eras, or dispensations, recounted and predicted in the Bible. Dispensationalism partly reflected a growing disillusionment with liberal theology in the late nineteenth century and

¹⁴ George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

a growing pessimism about civilization in the Western world, which produced a determination to separate from a wicked world. Postmillennialism, with its optimistic expectation of human redemption in the course of human history, had been a reigning outlook held confidently in Britain and the United States through much of the nineteenth century, but this began to change as concerns about the materialism and worldliness of capitalist civilization spread among a minority of religious people, especially regarding the future of the church. Premillennialism would grow in popularity in the late nineteenth century, explaining that Christ's kingdom was a supernatural one, not the earthly one foreseen by postmillennialism, and it would be discontinuous with the past. The world's institutions were beyond redemption, leading dispensationalists to question close ties between the church and the culture.¹⁵

The holiness movement was another key influence on the early twentieth century fundamentalist movement, and its origins can be traced back to early nineteenth-century revivalism and especially to Wesleyan Methodism, with its teaching of a second infusion of grace that could lead to "perfectionism" as an ideal. At the heart of holiness doctrine was the search for a dramatic and emotional second blessing of the Holy Spirit, which would represent purification, being saved from all sin. This experience came to be known as the "baptism of the Holy Ghost," and it was central to new denominations such as the Wesleyan Methodists, the Free Methodists, the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), the Nazarenes, the Pilgrim Holiness Church, and the Salvation Army (founded as the Christian Mission in East London). The pervasiveness of holiness teachings was seen in the new gospel song writers, Fanny J. Crosby in the United States and Frances R. Havergal in England, who created a "soft and tender" music that would infuse many denominations with a holiness sensibility. Notice, though, that most of these references are to northern evangelicals or British examples, not southerners.¹⁶

¹⁵ Ian S. Rennie, "Fundamentalism and the Varieties of North Atlantic Evangelicalism," in Noll, *Evangelicalism*, 333.

¹⁶ Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 1–5; Charles E. Jones, *Perfectionist Persuasion: The Holiness Movement and American Methodism, 1867–1936* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1974); Vinson Synon, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971).

Out of these British and American millennial and holiness influences and others, the fundamentalist movement appeared in the aftermath of the trauma of World War I. Germany had presented a tangible and fearful image to orthodox evangelicals, including southerners, of a secular, modernist society without moral anchorings. It was the home to modern liberal theology, with its skepticism of biblical authority and acceptance of evolutionary philosophy. Professor A. T. Robertson of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville wrote that the choice during the war was between "Kaiser or Christ, Napoleon or Jesus, Corsica or Galilee." He insisted that "the German government in nearly all it did represented the spirit of anti-Christ." American theological attraction to German thought suggested American civilization was in danger of the same decay and militarism that could be seen in Germany. The violence and destabilization of war caused questioning everywhere of the idea of easy progress, and fundamentalists provided clear theological answers at a time of turmoil.¹⁷

Southern religious leaders articulated fears and hopes in the post-war world that were catalysts for the emergence of fundamentalist thought in the region. "The condition of the world since the great war is that of a patient who has undergone a serious surgical operation," noted the Louisiana Baptist Convention in 1920. The incision had been made "but the wound has not been dressed," exposing it to "all the death-dealing germs afloat in a contaminated atmosphere." Many of these germs were now in the "social body and a complicated case of infection has set up." A. T. Robertson looked abroad and saw Russian anarchy as a looming threat in the wake of the communist revolution. "The shadow of Bolshevism stalks behind the vanishing ghost of pan-Germanism," he wrote, caught up as many Americans were in the Red Scare of 1919.¹⁸

Despite an awareness among southern religious leaders of the dangers facing the idea of a Christian civilization in the Western world, the fundamentalist movement made only limited advances in the South, as most southerners seemed to believe their denominations had escaped the taint of modernism's liberal theology. Four southerners did con-

¹⁷ A. T. Robertson, *The New Citizenship: The Christian Facing a New World Order* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1919), 25.

¹⁸ Archibald T. Robertson, "The Cry for Christ Today," in *The Christ of the Logia* (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1924): 233.

tribute to *The Fundamentals*, which outlined a doctrinal agenda, but few southerners were among the leaders of this national movement. They typically rejected, for example, overtures to join the World's Christian Fundamentalist Association. The fundamentalist movement did take root in the South, to be sure, although not dominating it in the early twentieth century. The Southfield Bible Conference Association began in 1904 in Crescent City, Florida, and its annual meetings served into the 1940s to spread ideas of the movement in the region. The Dallas Theological Seminary, founded in the mid-1920s, represented an influential moderate fundamentalism, making special contributions to dispensational premillennialism. Such individual preachers as Bob Jones and J. Frank Norris expressed a separatist version of fundamentalism in rebellion against modernity. Norris, for example, has been called "the guiding genius of Southern Baptist fundamentalism." He attacked the institutions of the Southern Baptist Convention relentlessly, presenting a fearful premillennialist outlook that saw little hope for existing cultural institutions. The fundamentalist movement came out of sophisticated intellectual sources that connected the Atlantic world's religious community, but southern fundamentalists like Norris retreated to a stress on local institutional control and a rural worldview. As historian James J. Thompson notes, "Norris urged Baptists to decentralize, to return to the local church with its program of constant evangelism." Norris thus embraced the traditional message of southern evangelicalism. Fundamentalism may have developed from transnational Atlantic world dialogue, but southerners like Norris rejected such connections in favor of old-time local autonomy in the southern religious world.¹⁹

Southerners did embrace one aspect of the national fundamentalist movement, namely opposition to the teaching of Darwinian evolution. The South was the site where legal prohibition of the teaching of evolution was achieved, with laws passed in Florida, Tennessee,

¹⁹ Quotes are from James J. Thompson Jr., *Tried as by Fire: Southern Baptists and the Religious Controversies of the 1920s* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1982), 15. See also Barry Hankins, *God's Rascal: J. Frank Norris and the Beginnings of Southern Fundamentalism* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996); William R. Glass, *Strangers in Zion: Fundamentalism in the South, 1900-1950* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2001); Mark Taylor Dalhouse, *An Island in the Lake of Fire: Bob Jones University, Fundamentalism, and the Separatist Movement* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996).

Mississippi, Arkansas, and Alabama. The Scopes Trial, in July of 1925, forever fastened the southern rural image on the face of fundamentalism, but it was an image that reflected the isolation of the South from the mainstream currents of a transatlantic evangelical movement rooted not in traditional rural ways so much as in attempts to provide a systematic theology to counter the eroding effects of modern society. Conservative evangelicals in Britain were of the non-controversialist variety, working often within the shelter of the long-established Anglican Church and with close ties to universities, which together provided more of an institutional anchor than was the case for American fundamentalists and certainly for southerners. The Scopes Trial was a puzzling phenomenon for the British public. "Perhaps no recent event in America stands more in need of explanation . . ." wrote a British commentator during the summer of the trial.²⁰

If World War I was an energizing experience for American evangelicals, giving expression to the fundamentalist movement, it also stands as the event that focused new southern energies on opportunities to evangelize the globe, even the world beyond the Atlantic. Southern Baptists led the way. The Home Mission Board noted that 1918, when the war ended, would be seen as the greatest year in human history, only excepting the year of Christ's birth. William L. Poteat, president of Wake Forest College, seemed to speak for many southern religious leaders in observing, "We have achieved a signal victory which promises to be permanent for civilization against barbarism." Southern leaders, with a vivid cultural memory of the Civil War and Reconstruction, realized the turbulence that likely lay ahead and saw a special mission for southern churches in expanded evangelical work. Edgar Y. Mullins, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, had predicted during the war that the conflict would lay the basis for new fulfillments of "God's purpose in Christ," and at war's end Southern Baptists began a new crusade to spread the gospel. The expanded horizons that came from participation in a world war led to a new urgency for world evangelism. Baptists had shared in wartime prosperity, and they believed God had given them new resources for home and foreign missions.²¹

²⁰ Quotation is from Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 222. See also Edward L. Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

²¹ Poteat quote found in Thompson, *Tried as by Fire*, 3; E. Y. Mullins, *The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1917), 352.

The Baptist strategy for converting the world began with the national context and drew on the idealism of the American civil religion. "America is in fact God's new Israel for the race of men," noted the Southern Baptist Convention in 1919. "It is a land divinely chosen, preserved with providential purpose, prospered now with world power, and pledged to a divine mission." In this regard, the war provided occasion for southern religious leaders to embrace the national mission with an enthusiasm not seen since well before the Civil War. They believed, though, that the nation's restlessness, materialism, secularism, and skeptical culture were a threat to America's Christian civilization. Conversion of mankind thus required attention to the redemption of the nation. Georgia's Baptists put it well: "We must save America to save the world." A. T. Robertson said that "America is a city set on a hill these days seen of all men. The eyes of the world are turned upon us. We must clean up our house and keep it clean if we are to lead the nations of the earth in the paths of peace to God and righteousness." The sense of regional mission that had long given meaning to the South's churches was also a part of this world redemption strategy, for southern churches were the last best hope for evangelical religion in their eyes. Victor I. Masters insisted that "As goes America, so goes the world. Largely as goes the South, so goes America. And in the South is the Baptist center of gravity of the world." M. S. Dodd, in a sermon preached at the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta in 1919, spoke in ringing phrases of that moment in time as a culmination of Southern Baptist history: "We have arrived at that moment in our history for which our forefathers toiled and sacrificed and prayed; for which they suffered and bled and died. The Baptist hour of all the centuries has sounded."²²

When Southern Baptists gathered in Atlanta in May of 1919 for their annual meeting, they approved an ambitious fund-raising drive to support missions and education—the Seventy-Five Million Dollar Campaign designed to raise three-quarters of a billion dollars in five years. Victory Week was in early December of 1919, when pledges were reported that totaled over ninety-two million dollars, far more than the goal. The following year's Southern Baptist Convention concluded that their age was "the most momentous period in Baptist history since the Day of Pentecost." In the end the campaign did not achieve all it

²² Quotes are from Thompson, *Tried as by Fire*, 10–11.

had hoped to achieve, as not all the pledges were redeemed and only fifty-eight million dollars was raised. That, of course, is a most significant amount, and it vastly improved missionary work. The failure to achieve the goal, though, along with declining economic conditions in the South, sapped the postwar optimism.²³

More extensive postwar Baptist efforts were also undermined by the energy devoted to affirming the denominational integrity of the Southern Baptist Convention against ecumenical efforts that denominational leaders saw as a growing threat. World War I had nurtured interdenominational cooperation and led to new visions of religion's role in the world after the war. Greater awareness of the world context of Southern Baptist work nurtured a newly energized sense of mission, and convention leaders believed they needed to affirm denominational lines even more than ever to ensure success of their mission of world evangelism. In the post-World War I period, they came to see a threat to their existence from national ecumenical cooperation. Despite theological differences and denominational competition, southern churches often had worked across denominational lines on social, charitable, and even community revivals, given their regional commonalities. This shared spirit was not true in regard to southern church attitudes toward national churches, especially the interdenominational agencies. In the same 1919 Southern Baptist Convention that saw the articulation of a vision of world evangelism, President James B. Gambrell lambasted the United States government for promoting a secret plan that gave government approval for Protestant denominations to do their wartime work under the direction of the interdenominational YMCA. Gambrell claimed the government had created a commission that included a Catholic, a Jew, and four Protestants of the "unionizing persuasion"; he insisted that the Federal Council of Churches, the YMCA, the Edinburgh Conference, the Foreign Missions Conference, and the Inter-Church World Movement were linked together in an insidious effort to undermine denominational lines. One of Gambrell's supporters, M. E. Dodd, delivered a fiery sermon at the 1919 convention, evoking William Jennings Bryan's 1916 "cross of gold" speech, declaring that "the world shall not crucify our convic-

²³ Thompson, *Tried as by Fire*, chap. 2. See also Robert A. Baker, *The Southern Baptist Convention and its People, 1607-1972* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1974).

tions upon a cross of unionism nor will we sell our principles for thirty pieces of popular praise."²⁴

Southern Baptists thus rejected any vision of a larger, united, interdenominational outreach designed to extend the gospel to a world newly opened to their imaginations, preferring their outreach to occur from within the southern evangelical empire, not within a wider American religious context in which they still, despite several generations since the religious divisions of the Civil War, had insufficient faith.

The World War I era expansion of thought about evangelizing the world built, of course, on the long efforts of southern churches in missionary work. We are going back in time now to the early nineteenth century. The compelling need for missionary work had brought together Baptists across the nation in 1814 to form the Triennial Convention, giving collaborative oversight to American missionary work. Rural Protestants in many denominations often opposed missionary efforts, sometimes for theological reasons, sometimes out of resentment of self-righteous northern missionaries trying to evangelize them, and sometimes out of backcountry class resentment directed at the urban denominational leaders who promoted missionary work. Such regional internal divisions thus put constraints on attempts at global evangelism. Missionary efforts were, nonetheless, well grounded in Scripture, including the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations. . . ."

The issue of missions became caught up, though, in growing sectional tensions between Baptists North and South in the early nineteenth century, becoming the catalyst for the institutional division of churches in the 1840s. When the Triennial Convention adopted a qualification prohibiting slaveholders from being missionaries, southerners soon withdrew to establish the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845. Among the first agencies of the new denomination was the Foreign Missions Board, an indication of the central importance of mission work to Southern Baptists. Northern and Southern Baptists divided up resources and territories, with China an early key target for both groups and West Africa a secondary area of evangelism.²⁵

²⁴ Quotations are from Thompson, *Tried as by Fire*, 21, 33.

²⁵ C. C. Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the American Civil War* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1985).

The early importance of missionary work to Southern Baptists and its steady expansion was paralleled in other major southern denominations. Ernest Trice Thompson once wrote that for the first fifty years after the founding of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (the Southern Presbyterian Church) in 1861, "it was 'Foreign' missions, which, more than any other benevolent cause, caught and held the imagination of Southern Presbyterians." Presbyterians knew foreign missions as "the glory of the church." The Southern Presbyterians had sent their first missionaries to China in 1867, and they remained through "civil wars, international wars, anti-foreign movements, revolutions, and political changes." The twentieth century was hard on foreign missions work, though, for all denominations, as seen in the litany of challenges in China alone. World War II stimulated renewed interest among southern evangelicals in missionary work. "The American GI has brought back a new witness to missions, the result of first-hand examination," wrote the Southern Presbyterian Executive Committee of Foreign Missions. "There is a new recognition that the trouble with the world has been fundamentally spiritual and that only a spiritual solution will suffice. . . ."²⁶

China loomed large among the southern white denominations as their chief global connection, and for none more so than the Baptists. The first SBC missionary in China quickly died of a sunstroke (becoming an unfortunate symbol of the difficulties of the work). The church would lag behind other American missionary efforts in China until the end of the nineteenth century, when there were still only forty-nine missionaries there, compared to the more than a hundred missionaries sponsored by northern Presbyterians and Methodists. The poverty of the post-Civil War South surely explains the limited scale of missionary work, but early twentieth century southern prosperity led to increased missionary fund-raising and better recruitment of missionaries. By 1924, a peak number of 287 SBC missionaries worked in China.

Charlotte Diggs "Lottie" Moon has been called "an acknowledged saint to a church that suspects saints and a symbol of interracial love in a section where hatred is supposed to have been peculiarly the rule." Her biographer concludes that she is a "genuine cultural heroine, to a degree seemingly unapproached by any other missionary—or for that matter

²⁶ Ernest Trice Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, vol. 3 (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1973), 427, 429.

any American of any sort—who ever went to China."²⁷ Given this significance, we should examine Lottie Moon's life for how her story can illuminate the role of southern religion in the world context—and especially the relationship between regional identity and global work.

Moon grew up as an embodiment of upper class southern gentility. She was born in 1840, the descendant of an Albemarle County, Virginia, patriarch who operated eight estates and owned hundreds of slaves. She grew up at Viewmont on a five thousand acre plantation that raised such important world economic products as tobacco and wheat. She experienced an evangelical conversion at a campus revival while at the Albemarle Female Institute. The Civil War had begun by the time she graduated, and she returned home to become a figure of the South's mythic Lost Cause, tending wounded soldiers from nearby battles, watching her siblings march off to war with the Confederate army, and hearing stories of her male relatives who rode with the guerilla-fighting Mosby's Rangers and of her female relatives who disguised themselves as Irish washerwomen and served as Confederate spies. After the war, she taught school in Alabama and Kentucky and involved herself in evangelistic work. Her sister Edmonia had become a missionary, and she brought back books of "eastern lands," over which Lottie Moon pored. She concluded that the books on China showed a place with a peculiar mix of heathenism and "advanced culture and ethical teachings," creating a sense of a promising missionary land and a spot of adventure for a capable young woman. With her family's postwar security shattered, at age thirty-two, she decided to become a missionary. A friend observed that she went to China "as though she were going home."²⁸

Moon was part of the Southern Baptist Convention's China Mission. She spent part of her time in urban areas with the greatest amenities (given the universal difficulty of missionary life), but she spent as much time as possible in the countryside, where the southerner in her felt most at home. To be sure, she was a refined southern lady who saw country people as the "Great Unwashed" and was dismayed as well at the lack of intellectual curiosity among Chinese peasants.

²⁷ Irwin T. Hyatt Jr., *Our Ordered Lives Confess: Three Nineteenth-Century American Missionaries in East Shantung* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 3, 93–94.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 96, 97.

Still, the independence and kinship strength she saw in the countryside impressed her, and she felt country people most appreciative of her efforts. Moon retained her regional southern identity at the same time she made her religious achievements in an alien world; she planted touch-me-nots with seed carried from her Virginia home, even while learning the Chinese language.²⁹

Moon began writing letters about her work in China, and they were soon appearing in the Foreign Mission Board's journal and the state denominational newspapers. In 1887 Moon suggested that Southern Baptist women were needed to save the Baptist mission in China, and she proposed a week of prayer and a special offering at Christmas to be dedicated to overseas mission work. Her work dovetailed with the emergence of missionary activity in the South as a special area of concern for women in the regional denominations. In the 1870s upper- and middle-class southern women in Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches began to turn their energies to church work, organizing local activities for support of home and foreign missionaries. Male church leaders soon came to rely on the considerable organizational and fund-raising talents of women and gave them their own separate sphere, in effect, through semi-independent women's missionary groups. In 1878 the Methodist General Conference created a Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, and after one year the agency counted 218 local societies, almost six thousand members, four thousand dollars in the treasury, and one missionary in China. A decade later there were over two thousand societies, almost fifty-seven thousand members, and missionaries in scores of places. Moon's efforts helped to bring about the formation of the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) in the late 1880s as an auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention.³⁰

The numbers of missionaries that southern denominations sent overseas were relatively small, but the influence of southern missions went far beyond those numbers. Women's missionary societies awakened the imaginations of southern women to other worlds and broke down the provincial worlds in which they sometimes lived. They went to their missionary society meetings and saw and heard women who worked in faraway places. They looked at photographs of schools built with local Virginia or Georgia or Mississippi money. They might admire a visiting Chinese child adopted by a missionary who was visiting their

²⁹ Ibid., 100.

³⁰ Ibid., 113–27, 132.

local church. One Virginia Methodist society in the 1890s heard a report about the "Hindoos" in India from the mother of a missionary there. She passed around a toy, and the group imagined life there, looking, as one account said, "upward to mountain upon mountain" or glancing "down into Himalayan gorges wrapped in perpetual gloom."³¹

The missionary work of Lottie Moon and others thus was a bridge between the international world and local communities with strong regional identities expressed in regionally oriented denominations. From the nineteenth century well into the twentieth, missionary work likely was responsible for more widespread specific knowledge about the world than any other southern activity.

The Lottie Moon story also illustrates what might be called the commercialization of southern missionary work in the twentieth century. Since 1918 the annual appeal of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) has been called the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions. The offering rose from \$44,110 in 1917 to \$306,376 in 1925 and should be viewed as part of the renewed sense of providential Southern Baptist destiny we have seen associated with World War I. Moon would soon become a key figure in the church's mission study program as well. Una Roberts Lawrence, a longtime member of the WMU, had been intrigued by China and by Lottie Moon, whom she called "Virginia's gifted daughter, God's precious gift to China." Her 1927 book on Moon became a literary document that helped spread the word on this missionary legend. Moon would soon be the subject of a radio narration, a series of dramatizations, a motion picture filmed through the Foreign Mission Board, two children's biographies, and the *Lottie Moon Cook Book*. All of these productions were important parts of the larger effort to raise funds for missions, and her story and its promotion have made her perhaps the most important symbol of southern religion's global reach.³²

Lottie Moon's story is, moreover, a specifically southern woman's story of success in coming out of a well-rooted southern regional culture to spread the gospel far beyond the South. Women praised her in her own time as "a Southern lady of the highest type," and other southern women supported her work in the beginning partly because they saw

³¹ Beth Barton Schweiger, *The Gospel Working Up: Progress and the Pulpit in Nineteenth-Century Virginia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 160.

³² Hyatt, *Our Ordered Lives Confess*, 126–29.

her as a woman of "fine intellect, rare culture, and splendid social gifts," all qualities lauded in the mythic view of the southern lady. But her significance as a specifically female figure goes far beyond this mythic level, because she witnessed for an active and free life for women in global religious work. She insisted that "what women want who come out to China is free opportunity to do the largest possible work," and she added that "what women have a right to demand is perfect equality."³³

If the Atlantic world and China were areas of southern religious global interaction, Africa was as well. African-American churches saw a providential role for their work in Africa, a role which related to their place in American society and reflected specifically their role in the South. African issues consumed the black church's attention, including debates on emigration and colonization and the significance of African missions. Martin Delaney, one of the leading African-American antebellum intellectuals, went to Africa in 1859 seeking lands for African-American settlement and established an ideological rationale for the need for specifically black missionary work. Delaney believed in a strong racial identity that connected Africans and African Americans. He insisted that "our plan must be . . . Africa for the African race and black men to rule them." White missionaries might labor in the field, but ultimately the redemption of Africans would come about only through people of African ancestry who would be "homogeneous in all the natural characteristics, claims, sentiments and sympathies" of Africans. Yet he showed little interest in indigenous African culture, foreseeing the same need for thoroughgoing change in customs that white missionaries saw. He believed that Christianization would be linked to spreading "civilization," by which he meant Victorian era standards. African "habits, manners, and customs," he said, had to be uprooted to bring progress.³⁴

The post-Civil War years brought dramatic change to black religion in the United States, with developments in the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) especially revealing. That church was formed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the 1790s, and its very name suggests the early importance of an African connection to the denomination. With the end of slavery, AME missionaries came south, bring-

³³ Ibid., 104, 105, 112, 131.

³⁴ James T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 76-77.

ing institutional structures in contact with the folk traditions of the slave's "invisible religion" of praise worship. Enduring regional tensions resulted, as the church increasingly became a southern-dominated institution after the war. Northern church leaders were often appalled at the worship services of southern blacks. Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne was born in Charleston but fled north in the 1830s, eventually settling in Philadelphia and becoming a church leader who pushed for higher educational standards for ministers and a more cultivated tone to worship services. He complained that southern black ministers perpetuated "fanaticism," "stamping, beating the Bible, cutting odd capers," in order to stimulate their congregations to "shouting, jumping, and dancing." He saw southern spirituals as too emotional, and he and his colleagues were troubled that southern black churches sometimes used the banjo (a folk instrument of African origins) instead of the piano in services. Payne insisted that congregations use the prescribed Methodist hymnal and instituted formal choirs to downplay congregational participation in the musical service. Payne generally opposed African missions as well, seeing them as a waste of limited church resources.³⁵

Despite Bishop Payne's northern, middle-class sensibilities, most African Americans remained in the South after the Civil War, and their support for African missions grew, often tied to developments in southern society. Edward Ridgel, an AME minister from Arkansas, visited Africa in the 1890s and remained as a missionary. Looking back, he remembered Reconstruction as a time of hope for black equality in the South but saw the end of Reconstruction as a "fearful catastrophe" for African Americans. He insisted, though, that Reconstruction had to be seen as a "divine visitation" meant to lead blacks "to leave the haunts of American slavery and pitch their tents on the free and sacred soil of Africa, and assist in the establishment of a mighty Negro empire." The pastor of Atlanta's Bethel AME Church agreed, announcing after legal segregation was established in the early 1890s that it was time for blacks "to leave Georgia and go to their own country, Africa, where they would have equal rights and help govern and have street cars of their own." Segregated street cars had already become a symbol of a segregated South, one only to be escaped by migration to Africa.³⁶

³⁵ Ibid., 37-42, 53-60.

³⁶ Ibid., 78, 84.

The antebellum emigration of American blacks to Africa and their missionary work there had been dominated by northern whites, operating under the authority of the American Colonization Society; but black ministers, mostly from the South, controlled the process after the war. In South Carolina, Arkansas, and later Oklahoma, communities sold their goods and left for Africa. The most revealing incident occurred in Charleston in the late 1870s, when leaders of the African-American community, including the aged Martin Delaney, chartered the Liberian Exodus Joint Stock Steamship Company and purchased a ship, the *Azor*, to take 206 blacks to Liberia. In the spring of 1878, ten thousand people gathered at the Charleston harbor to see the vessel and its passengers off for their trip. B. F. Porter was pastor of a local AME church and the president of the company, and in addressing the crowd he praised the emigrants as Christian soldiers whose very presence would speed "the evangelization of the millions of their people who now sat in darkness." Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, perhaps the church's leading advocate for African missions, also addressed the gathering, explaining the voyage as a providential moment. Standing on the landing where most African slaves had first touched land in North America, looking across the Charleston harbor where the shots were fired that launched the Civil War, Turner said that the contents of the *Azor* represented the future of both Christianity and the black race. Returning to Africa with "the culture, education, and religion acquired here," the settlers would ignite the process of redemption, "until the blaze of gospel truth should glitter over the whole broad African continent."³⁷

The aftermath of this high rhetoric presents us with a cautionary tale, though. The hopefulness of the *Azor* voyage was short lived. The ship had to be sold after its first trip to pay off debts. Twenty-three passengers had died in route to Africa, and disease took dozens more when they arrived. Many disillusioned emigrants returned to South Carolina, but an AME mission had been successfully planted in Liberia as a result of the voyage.

Bishop Turner would continue as the church's main promoter of African missions. He had a vision of a great Christian empire in Africa. Ironically, a seemingly unlikely global intellectual connection inspired Turner. Swedish philosopher Emmanuel Swedenborg was a

³⁷ Ibid., 79.

well-known New Thought advocate in the late nineteenth century, and he looked to Africa for the rise of a new, spiritually purified Christianity to supplant what he saw as the outdated, decaying faith of the Western world. These ideas attracted the attention of black church leaders, and Turner used his patronage and authority to attract protégés to carry out his emigration and mission goals. He founded a journal, the *Voice of Missions*, which typically juxtaposed features recounting American racial atrocities with stories of Africa's untapped potential for wealth and spiritual development. The masthead of the journal included a map of the world, highlighting a direct link between North America and Africa, with text proclaiming the latter "The Great Future of the Race, Characterized by Liberty, Self Reliance, Christianity and Manhood." Like Delaney before him and most advocates of African missions, Turner did not see African culture itself as one to be emulated. He believed in a universal "civilization" toward which all peoples were evolving. Black missionaries would conquer Africa for Christ, dispelling "darkness" and "paganism." Like other missionary advocates, Turner had a vested interest in seeing the world overseas as a backward one in need of Christian liberation. With Turner's leadership, the AME church instituted the annual Easter Day mission collection to provide increased resources for African evangelism, establishing another symbol of a global religious link with strong southern roots.³⁸

African missions by the African Methodists also depended on the influence of women's organizations within the church. The church established the Woman's Mite Missionary Society in the 1870s, the same years that women's missionary groups were appearing among the southern white denominations, and the name itself suggested the power in combining the small mites of individual church members into larger sums to support missionaries. The AME church launched the Women's Home and Foreign Missionary Society later in the century, and by 1900 the General Conference had dedicated a Woman's Day to the discussion of missionary activity. These women's groups proclaimed a distinctly feminine interpretation of the redemption of Africa. Male church leaders, like Bishop Turner, had seen Africa as a fatherland that American blacks would "conquer" for Christ and thereby redeem their own African-American manhood. African-American women, however, typically pictured Africa as a motherland, poor

³⁸ Ibid., 80-88.

and exploited, in need of a feminine healing hand. The Mite Society's journal was *Women's Light and Love for Heathen Africa*, indicating women's special outlook in comparison to the often militaristic sensibility in Turner's *Voice of Missions*. They shared, though, a sense of a special African-American destiny to redeem Africa, one that mirrored and reinforced the southern white religious outlook on the importance of overseas missionary work.³⁹

The global missionary outreach of southern blacks and whites thus came out of a regional society with a deep-seated sense of an evangelical mission to convert the world, a strong awareness of racial identities, and a sense of differing gender roles in the outreach. As with missionary efforts throughout the Western world, the southern missionary project approached the overseas peoples they worked among as non-Christian pagans—heathen would likely have been the term used. By the twentieth century southern churches had recorded innumerable baptisms, established indigenous congregations, trained local ministers, built schools, maintained medical projects, and distributed millions of copies of Bibles, tracts, books, and periodicals. After World War II and the establishment of national identities throughout much of Africa, Asia, and other areas served by missionaries, missionary workers came under criticism for their attitudes and practices of Western cultural superiority, and southern missionaries were no exception.

We should note, however, that southern missionaries and mission agencies played an under-recognized role in witnessing against racism during the years of the civil rights movement. Progressive Baptists, for example, were in leadership positions on the Home Mission Board, the Foreign Mission Board, and the Woman's Missionary Union. While maintaining their traditional commitment to individual conversion and salvation, progressive Baptists articulated through the Southern Baptist Convention channels of communication a theology that explained the biblical justification for racial equality and human unity, the international aspects of race relations being played out in the post-World War II South, and the responsibility of individual Christians to improve race relations. Their testimony of the international dimensions of American race relations is especially relevant to our story of southern religion's global role. They boldly identified racism as the problem, an issue manifested in colonialism overseas but also in Jim Crow racial

³⁹ Ibid., 93–94.

segregation in the South. As Alan Scott Willis notes, "Southern Baptist missionaries and mission board leaders persistently challenged the prevailing views of race and dominant practices of their region." Their contribution surely stands as a culmination of the decades of international involvement by missionaries and mission board leaders, whose contacts with overseas peoples contributed to developing a reform theology that openly challenged the "southern way of life" in the 1950s and 1960s, despite all the dangers of so doing.⁴⁰

One new development of global outreach since the 1960s that is deeply anchored in southern religion deserves special attention—religious broadcasting. In the twentieth century Billy Graham perfected the mass evangelical campaign—debuting in the United States but later delivering his message in giant rallies around the world. Beginning in the 1970s, ministers of the "electronic church" used satellite technology to build on Graham's global work and beam their traditional message globally as a new electronic mass evangelism. Televangelism has come to represent a distinctive feature of the South's global-local connection. To be sure, televangelism is not uniquely southern, but it does reflect a dynamic of southern evangelical outreach that we should not overlook. Many of the major televangelists have been from the region, beginning with Graham and Oral Roberts, but including Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson in Virginia; James Robison, Kenneth Copeland, and T. D. Jakes in Texas; and Jimmy Swaggart in Louisiana. The audience for the electronic church is also drawn disproportionately from the South, though with this strong southern base, televangelists connect their evangelical and/or fundamentalist messages to a broad global audience. An international edition of the *700 Club* on Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) is sent to over four hundred countries. CBN launches special media efforts in Asia, North Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. Jimmy Swaggart's broadcasts, despite his earlier troubles, are still seen throughout Latin America, and the Trinity Broadcasting Network, like other electronic church venues, holds crusades overseas that in turn are broadcast internationally.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Alan Scott Willis, *All According to God's Plan: Southern Baptist Missions and Race, 1945–1970* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2005).

⁴¹ Jeffrey K. Hadden, "Broadcasting Religions," in *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, ed. Charles Reagan Wilson and Samuel S. Hill, vol. 1 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006): 39–44.

This electronic missionary work reflects the evangelical dynamic of going to all the nations of the world—in this case, to all those with televisions. Televangelists have discovered, though, the need to close the distance between them and their audiences to achieve the conversions that are their goal. Estimates are that no more than 5 percent of all conversions claimed by Protestant churches can be attributed to mass evangelism in general, much less to televangelism. Most conversions come from the intercession of friends, neighbors, and family members in the context of local communities. Televangelists complement their international media programs with the creation of local networks, epitomizing the central importance of local work as a follow-up to delivery of a global message. "These territorially based communities allow them to offer not just media but direct face-to-face evangelism," writes media expert Berit Bretthauer. Telechurches create their own parachurch organizations. These are special purpose agencies, so that viewers can be directed to prison ministries, healing ministries, Bible study groups, and missionary activities in local places. Parachurch groups allied with telechurches might include phone counseling centers, humanitarian aid groups, political and judicial organizations, and groups aiding world missions. Using these special purpose groups, televangelists energize countless volunteers who contribute to common causes and strengthen the local aspect of evangelical broadcasting.⁴²

The Christian Broadcasting Network's World Reach Centers are a good example. By the late 1990s there were 97 such centers in 59 countries. They adjusted CBN's television and radio programs to the specific cultures they were reaching. To accomplish this goal, World Reach Centers work with local leadership aware of the cultural needs and expectations of specific communities. Viewers of programs produced in Virginia were encouraged to contact local centers through phone, mail, or personal visits. They trained indigenous leaders around the world, who then formed "cell churches" and accumulated thousands of names of potential converts. "Think globally. Act locally," advises Berit Bretthauer. "This is what American telepreachers do. They demonstrate a growing sensitivity to the limits of religious glo-

⁴² Berit Bretthauer, "Televangelism: Local and Global Dimensions," in *Religions/Globalizations: Theories and Cases*, ed. Dwight N. Hopkins, Lois Ann Lorentzen, Eduardo Mendieta, and David Batstone (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001): 203. See also Alex Foege, *The Empire God Built: Inside Pat Robertson's Media Machine* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1996).

balization via electronic media." This realization has made work in local places ever more important.⁴³

In conclusion, let me return to the term *mission*, which is the beginning point for understanding the South's religious role in the global context. European expansion in the early modern period sought economic development but also the diffusion of Christianity to the New World, including the southern colonies. The colonies were settled at a time of religious creativity in Europe following the Protestant Reformation, and missionaries roamed around the Southeast. The presence of Africans and remnants of African religions would make for an on-going, distinctive global-regional connection as southern religion was developing. We need to acknowledge that African religious culture infused the overall religious culture of the American South at a formative period and in an enduring way. The Atlantic world context for southern religion's development can also be seen in the interaction and cultural exchange of southern evangelicals with evangelical Protestants in the northern United States and in Great Britain. In this relationship one sees with new clarity the differences between southern evangelicals and those elsewhere. Southern evangelical Protestantism differed from that in the North and in Great Britain in its single-minded focus on conversion, its long dominance of a culture, and its individualistic interpretation of the post-conversion ethical life. Anthropologist James Peacock has argued that placing the South in global context often shows that the South has more in common with the rest of the world than with the American North. This conclusion often proves true, but it does not appear to be the case in terms of evangelicalism, which has a distinctive role in the South that remains clear.

Southern religious outreach to the world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was grounded on a belief in a distinctive providential destiny, taking a religion purified by the spiritual burdens of southern history and shaped by its hegemonic influence on a regional culture, as the base from which began the crusade to convert the world. The term *mission* here brings literal missionaries into clear focus. Missionary efforts show southern religion's global aspirations. They were central to the emergence of the Southern Baptist Convention and were embraced by other regionally organized mainstream Protestant churches from the nineteenth century onwards. Blacks and

⁴³ Bretthauer, "Televangelism," 223.

whites would sponsor missionary work and invest their efforts with providential meaning, while women would be central organizers and representatives of this world outreach. Women were not at the margins but at the center of attempts to expand the work of southern denominations around the world.

One should not romanticize the effects of global contact on southerners who regarded themselves as racially or culturally superior to those they sought to evangelize. Still, mission work likely provided wider horizons than in any other venue of southern life. Today, with China and Africa as areas of unprecedented concern to Americans, these southern missionary efforts establish an old linkage for new cultural connections. Recent developments in the globalization of the South are not happening in a historical vacuum. This chapter has been an effort at historical recovery of the various elements that made for an on-going global context for southern religious life.

Lecture 2

The World Comes South: The Changing Context of Southern Religion

"We are all people of the South," said former North Carolina governor Jim Hunt in April 2001, "and we share so much." He was speaking to the Indus Entrepreneurs, a professional organization of South Asian Americans, and he celebrated the cultural similarities between South Asians and North Carolinians, noting their shared belief in the "sanctity of the family, of religion, of education, and of hard work." He added that "for us, our entrepreneurial values are rooted in our cultural values."¹ It was a significant moment indeed when a political spokesman for the South's public culture acknowledged the importance of the new immigration to the South that had occurred since the 1960s, and his litany of cultural values included "religion." As we have seen, southern missionaries had by that point long gone out into the world to convert the "heathen"; and yet here were a notable new group of immigrants to the South who were being symbolically embraced, despite their religious heritages representing Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam, world religions traditionally alien to the American South.

If this was a positively symbolic instance, we should note also that the welcome has not always been so warm. The year before Hunt's speech, in February 2000, David Duke, the former Louisiana state legislator, unsuccessful candidate for Louisiana governor, and then-director

¹ Ajantha Subramanian quotes Jim Hunt in "North Carolina's Indians: Erasing Race to Make the Citizen," in *The American South in a Global World*, ed. James L. Peacock, Harry Watson, and Carrie R. Matthews (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005): 192.

of the National Organization for European American Rights, came to Siler City, North Carolina, in mostly rural Chatham County, to warn its citizens to be on guard against the new immigrants in their midst. The county had experienced a 741 percent increase in the Hispanic population during the previous decade, and four hundred citizens gathered at the town center, the city hall, to hear Duke say that "Siler City is at a crossroads." He insisted they must tell their "public officials to get the INS in here and get these illegal immigrants out or you'll lose your homes, you'll lose your schools, you'll lose your way of life." For the southerners in the audience, his use of the phrase "way of life" must have been a resonant one, evoking the term "southern way of life" used by political and cultural opponents of changes to the Jim Crow system of racial segregation in the civil rights era. Now, though, to Duke, the South was the battlefield for national dangers of ethnic and religious change. "Siler City is symbolic of what's happening in America," Duke said. "Your battle here is America's battle." David Duke thus worked from within national and regional contexts in protesting the coming of global influences to a local southern place.

Commentators have long pictured the South as the most homogeneous, culturally isolated, economically stagnant, and culturally parochial region of the United States, but the last four decades have witnessed unprecedented change that has created a new context for southern society. Regional landmarks have toppled: King Cotton no longer rules agriculture; agriculture no longer rules the economy; Jim Crow racial segregation laws are illegal; cities and suburbs attract the southern populace more than rural areas; non-southern Americans retire to the region or come here to work, disrupting old routines. The South's economy is today the fastest growing in the nation, in a region once infamous during the Depression as the "nation's no. 1 economic problem." Historians have long pointed out that most immigrants in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries went to places other than the South because the economy did not offer the job opportunities found in the expanding industries of the Northeast and Midwest, but the

² Thomas Tweed quotes David Duke in "Our Lady of Guadeloupe Visits the Confederate Monument: Latino and Asian Religions in the South," in *Religion in the Contemporary South: Changes, Continuities, and Contexts*, ed. Corrie E. Norman and Don S. Ammentrout (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005): 145.

booming southern economy of the last decade has made the region the "immigrant belt" in unprecedented ways.³

One might wonder about religion's role in the changing South of recent times. Surely it remains the Bible Belt, dominated by evangelical Protestant churches and moral values. Geographers see the South as one of the identifiably distinctive religious regions in the United States, and attitudes seem to validate this characterization. A 1998 Southern Focus Poll revealed that almost two out of ten southerners go to worship services more than once a week, more than twice the rate for people not from the South. More southerners (87.5 percent) say they believe in God, while 41.6 percent of southerners (as opposed to 33.2 percent of non-southerners) say that religion is "extremely important" to them. The role of the white evangelical Protestant churches, African-American churches, and the New Christian Right in the last two presidential campaigns suggests even a new militancy of religious outlooks long associated with the Bible Belt.⁴

This evidence of the continued vitality of the traditional southern religion, based in evangelical Protestant dominance tracing back to the 1830s, must be seen, though, in light of a changing southern context, shaped in part by coming of new immigrant peoples and new world religions. Samuel S. Hill notes that this religious diversity contributes to "a dominant fact of the contemporary scene, the dismantling of normative religious patterns and conditions." More bluntly, Bill J. Leonard addresses changes in the region's dominating religious institution, the Southern Baptist Convention, with the question that is the title of a recent article: "A Crumbling Empire: Is There a Baptist Future in the South?" Prosperity, secularization, the role of the media and technology, all are broad forces that are obstacles to the maintenance of traditional ways in the South in general, and especially so in terms of religion. The coming of new peoples and religions has brought new challenges to evangelical Protestantism in the South. The traditional mission of redeeming the world by evangelistic efforts, at home and internationally, has shifted. As Samuel Hill notes, "Still assured that they are 'God's last and only hope' [the title of another of Hill's studies], the pure in mind and heart in this one American region now

³ George E. Pozzetta, "Ethnic Life," in *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, ed. Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989): 401-5.

⁴ Tweed, "Our Lady of Guadeloupe Visits the Confederate Monument," 140.

have another urgent mission, preventing alien ideologies from turning absolutist Christian teachings into heresy and granting legitimacy to foreign ideologies, including world religions."⁵ If a new pluralism can be seen emerging in the recent South, a renewed sense of evangelical mission once again projects the need to preserve the South as the heartland of this religion.

This lecture briefly will outline the history of two world religions, Roman Catholicism and Judaism, in the earlier South, survey the demographic and cultural prominence of new religions in the last few decades, chart how they are adapting to the South and changing it, and finally assess the reaction of existing southern religion to these developments. If globalization is often conveyed in economic terminology, it also has cultural ramifications. As Bryan McNeil notes, "as political and economic priorities are rearranged, the cultural legacies of those changes are left to be managed by the communities they affect." "Culture" is a "key political trope of globalization" and has been used in many ways by "states, corporations, and transnational subjects." We will be assessing what developments in southern religion say about globalization's effect on a previously well defined southern regional culture. Peter Beyer sees a link between "religious faith and particularistic identity," and this insight has surely been true for religion's role in anchoring a distinctive southern regional identity that goes back to the 1830s.⁶ How is globalization affecting this linkage between the South's religion and its cultural identity?

Looking at the global context of southern religious history makes us aware of past transnational migrations of peoples to the American South. It also offers the opportunity to look beyond the usual North-South comparison. In the nineteenth century, to be sure, the South received less foreign immigration than other regions of the United States, but, as George Pozzetta has noted, "the region throughout its history has contained a heterogeneous population by world standards." He adds that "too much has been made of the cultural homogeneity of the South."⁷ We have seen that the colonial South contained diverse

⁵ Samuel S. Hill, "Introduction," and Bill J. Leonard, "Is There a Baptist Future in the South," in Norman, *Religion in the Contemporary South*, xiv, xix, 75-88.

⁶ Bryan McNeil, "Global Forces, Local Worlds: Mountaintop Removal and Appalachian Communities," in *The American South in a Global World*, 99; Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalization* (London: Sage Publications, 1994).

⁷ Pozzetta, "Ethnic Life," 401.

ethnic populations and religious groups, such as the Swiss Mennonites, English Quakers, Scotch Irish Presbyterians, French Huguenots, and German Pietists. The rise of evangelical Protestants to hegemony in the early nineteenth century did not foreclose the presence of other groups. Episcopalians were a notable religious minority, as later were such restorationist groups as the Disciples of Christ and the Churches of Christ, followed by holiness groups and Pentecostals. These groups were indigenous to the South and often added not ethnic but social class diversity to evangelical Protestant hegemony. Their presence created not one religious context but several for foreign immigrants coming to the region.

Place mattered in terms of the regional contexts for immigrant-based religions coming into differing parts of the South. Religious minorities in the Upper South of hill country and mountains faced, and still face, somewhat different experiences and cultural forms from those in the Lower South. The Baptists represent the largest religious denomination in most counties of the South, but their greatest strength reaches from southern Appalachia into the Deep South states of Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, into northern Louisiana and east Texas, and into southern Arkansas and southeastern Oklahoma. The mountains of east Tennessee were an important hearth for white Pentecostalism, giving birth to the Church of God, while the Deep South state of Mississippi, and Memphis in particular, nurtured black Pentecostalism through the Church of God in Christ. The Churches of Christ, a theologically conservative and morally strict group that grew out of the Presbyterians, are one of the numerically largest and culturally powerful religious groups from middle Tennessee down through north Mississippi, Arkansas, and into central and west Texas, but Catholic and Jewish minorities living in other parts of the South would hardly have known the group. Catholics themselves formed a majority in Louisiana, which, until 1960, accounted for more than half the southern Catholic population. Catholics are concentrated throughout southern Louisiana, but elsewhere Catholicism is an urban religion. Catholics have occupied the geographic margins of the South: Maryland, Florida, Kentucky, and Texas. Southern Jewish religious practices and traditions likewise reflected differing southern locales. Jews in cities with larger communities, such as Charleston, Savannah, Richmond, Memphis, and Atlanta, were more likely to practice strict religious routines than Jews on the frontier or in rural areas. Living in those

isolated areas made adherence to traditional dietary regulations and ritual observances almost impossible. Catholics and Jews have played notable cultural roles in small towns throughout the South, as business owners, teachers, and other community leaders, even when representing only a few families. The Mississippi Delta, for example, has been the home of identifiable communities of Italian and Lebanese Catholics, Chinese Baptists, and Jews, all of whom have entered into small town public life and the folklore of the region, from Jewish peddlers to Catholic nuns at community centers to Asian grocery store owners.⁸

Two non-Protestant religions took root in the historic South, Roman Catholicism and Judaism. Roman Catholicism in the region dates to the French and Spanish presence along the Gulf Coast as far back as the sixteenth century and the founding of Maryland as a Catholic refuge in the 1600s. The mid-nineteenth century saw the coming of Irish and German immigrants who brought their Catholicism to the Protestant and agrarian-dominated region that had become suspicious of outsiders as potential threats to a conservative slave society. Catholics would thereafter represent a continuing global presence in the South because the church was composed of mostly non-English ethnic groups, its religious services differed from the evangelical Protestant mainstream and often embodied distinctive ethnic styles, and its ecclesiastical authority rested overseas. Communities of priests reflected the multi-ethnic character of the church, as such European-based orders as the Jesuits, Dominicans, and French Sulpicians played key leadership roles in the region's Catholic churches. This global presence meant not just conflict, at times, with native evangelicals; ethnic tensions within the South's Catholic churches were ever present as well. French-born Catholics in Maryland found themselves in disputes with Irish immigrants in nearby Virginia parishes in the early nineteenth century, and New Orleans's Creoles resented the growing Irish presence in the Louisiana church later in the century. The Irish and the Germans fought to establish churches in New Orleans that would reflect their overall ethnic dominance. Italian immigrants came to the South in the late nineteenth century, injecting a new and conflicting ethnic influence into the southern church. Differing European

⁸ For a good overview of the demographic aspects of the South's religious geography, see Ted Ownby, "Evangelical but Undifferentiated: Religion by the Numbers," in *Religion and Public Life in the South: In the Evangelical Mode*, ed. Charles Reagan Wilson and Mark Silk (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Alta Mira Press, 2005): 31–62.

ethnic Catholic traditions were reflected in differing cults of the saints, individual devotional activities, and religious styles.⁹

Ethnic southern Catholics both maintained a separation from predominant southern Protestant cultural forms and adapted to the South's particular cultural context. Recurring Nativism expressed the Protestant South's hostility to this global ethnic and religious presence, as seen especially in the hardening of xenophobia in the 1890s (at the same time racial segregation was put into legal place by southern legislatures) and in the rise of the second Ku Klux Klan that targeted Catholics and Jews, as well as blacks, after World War I.

Such intimidation and hostility led Catholics to look inward and form communities to preserve their presence as a religious minority and promote Catholic unity despite internal differences. The church was a barrier against the dominant Protestant culture, maintained through building parochial schools, church colleges, community associations, and charitable institutions. At the same time, Catholics adapted to the southern context. Racial attitudes represented the touchstone of the southern identity during slavery and, later, Jim Crow segregation, and southern Catholics did little to separate themselves from white southern Protestants in this regard. While church leaders urged slaveowners to treat slaves humanely, they adopted the proslavery defense, and Catholics, including Jesuits, owned slaves. Bishops endorsed secession and blessed Catholic soldiers marching off to fight for the Confederacy, and Father Abram Ryan became the "poet-priest of the Lost Cause," sacralizing the Confederacy after the war ended. Racial segregation in Catholic parishes developed slowly after the war, but soon Catholic institutions refused to serve blacks. Each southern diocese eventually operated multiple racially segregated parish school systems, orphanages, hospitals, and religious societies. White Catholics fought desegregation, as did their white Protestant neighbors. Such identification with the dominant social order enabled Catholics to avoid, to a degree, confrontation over issues of their religious differences, given their unities with other whites along racial lines.¹⁰

⁹ Randall M. Miller and Jon Wakelyn, eds., *The Catholic Church in the Old South* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1983); Gary W. McDonogh, *Black and Catholic in Savannah, Georgia* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993); Michael J. McNally, *Catholicism in South Florida, 1868–1968* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1982).

¹⁰ Stephen B. Ochs, *Desegregating the Altar: The Josephites and the Struggle*

Jews had similar experiences in charting their way as members of a religious minority in the South. Their presence in the South dates back to the formation of early communities in Charleston and Savannah in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These were peoples of Sephardic and Ashkenazic origin, coming from Portugal, England, Holland, Poland, Brazil, and Jamaica. Later, in the nineteenth century, a second wave of immigrants came, this time from Germany, Bohemia, Moravia, Galicia, Alsace, and areas of eastern Europe. A third immigration brought new peoples, mostly from eastern European areas, into existing Jewish communities. The result was sometimes the same ethnic tensions that existed in the Catholic church, with Reform Judaism, Conservative Judaism, and Orthodox Judaism often tied in to ethnicity.

Early southern Judaism borrowed elements from the larger southern community, especially Christian and Masonic practices, ideals, and architecture. Synagogues came to look like Protestant worship spaces. American Reform Judaism began at a southern synagogue, Charleston's Beth Elohim Congregation, which had pioneered in instituting English language services, revising prayer books, seating men and women together, and abandoning the prayer shawl and head covering of tradition. All of these changes came out of a context in which Jews adapted to the culture around them. According to Jennifer A. Stollman, "Reform Judaism taught that modifying Judaism to fit the southern context would preserve Judaism as well as encourage southern gentile tolerance of Jews." Orthodox Jews disagreed, believing that this new Judaism was "virtually indistinguishable from Protestantism."¹¹ High rates of intermarriage with non-Jews became a threat to preservation of the strict Judaism that the Orthodox favored. Anti-Semitism was always underneath the surface of gentile-Jewish relations in the South, and Jewish efforts to mirror the larger Protestant culture helped to defuse outright conflicts. Evangelicals, at the same time, admired Jews as biblical people, which meant much to them;

for *Black Priests, 1871-1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990); Randall M. Miller, "Roman Catholics (in the South)," in *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South*, ed. Samuel S. Hill and Charles H. Lippy, 2nd ed. (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2005): 674-85.

¹¹ Jennifer A. Stollman, "Jewish Religious Life," in *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, ed. Charles Reagan Wilson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006): 83. See also Mark K. Bauman, "The Flowering of Interest in Southern Jewish History and its Integration into Mainstream History," in Norman, *Religion in the Contemporary South*, 159-90.

they also sometimes targeted Jews for proselytization as part of their effort to fulfill prophecy.

By the early twentieth century, Jewish federations and community councils existed in the region's major urban areas, and Hebrew schools and summer camps soon provided structured education in the faith. Jewish organizations, both religious and secular, provided care for orphans, the disabled, the poor, and widows. Again, as with the Catholic experience, Jews never fully assimilated to the larger culture, establishing their own institutions parallel to those of the public sphere and creating, in effect, a separate Jewish society. At the same time, they claimed the southern identity easily. They were nineteenth-century political leaders, with Judah Benjamin's prominent role in the Confederacy a symbol of their willingness and ability to play a public role. They fought for the Confederacy and did not openly challenge segregation laws, but folklore suggests their ability at times to transcend the color barrier. The civil rights era created tensions with northern Jews who came south to reform the region, leaving southern Jews to deal with conflicts afterwards with southern whites. In general, Jews in the South since then have embraced both their regional and their ethnic-religious identities, as seen in such frequently used terminology as "kosher grits" and "Shalom, y'all."¹²

The Catholics and Jews who came to the historic South sought economic opportunity and religious freedom. They came into a regional culture with pronounced expectations of orthodox thought, a racially obsessed place that became what James Silver would call "the closed society" in the twentieth century. These groups established distinctive institutions in the evangelical Protestant South and generally thrived, establishing models of survival in the Bible Belt. They enriched local communities with diverse ways and put their stamp on particular regions within the South and on cities where their numbers were large enough to influence the larger culture. They became southerners, and attention to how they combined elements of their international religious inheritances and ethnic cultures with southern outlooks suggests the southern identity can not be limited to a few stereotypical qualities of the descendants of Anglo Saxons, Celts, and Africans, central as

¹² Eli Evans, *The Provincials: A Personal History of Jews in the South* (New York: Atheneum, 1973); Marcie Cohen Ferris, *Matzoh Ball Gumbo: Culinary Tales of the Jewish South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); *Shalom, Y'All: The Documentary Film* (Shalom Y'All Films, 2002).

those predominant groups have been. Catholics and Jews showed how ethnicity, religion, and regional identity could come together.¹³

Today immigrants are coming in surprising numbers to the South, as a part of a new globalization. As with Catholics and Jews, they are establishing separate institutions to preserve their ethnic-religious identities, and they are adapting to, and changing, the South as well. Changes in national immigrant laws in the 1960s made it easier for immigrants around the world to come to the United States, including the South. In the four decades after 1960 the South's foreign-born population has quadrupled, with Texas's foreign-born population representing 14 percent of its total number of residents, while about 17 percent of the Florida population was born someplace other than the United States. Southwide, Latinos and Asians make up 14 percent of the population, and the region is home to a total of 8.1 million foreign-born people. In addition to immigrants from Latin America, whom we will discuss in a moment, there are Laotian communities in North Carolina and south Alabama. Vietnamese settled in small towns in the 1970s and afterwards, now have communities in New Orleans and Houston, and experienced the devastation of Hurricane Katrina along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Cities, small towns, and rural areas have attracted foreign-born residents from India, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, and such Southeast Asian countries as Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Sri Lanka. The Middle East has sent immigrants to the South who have been caught up in living in a complicated post-September 11 world.

Perhaps the most important statistic one might remember, reflecting the specifically *religious* impact of this immigration, is that over 20 percent of southerners are now affiliated with a non-Protestant faith, whether Catholicism, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, or another faith. Immigrants have brought religions seldom seen in the historic South, and it is striking that Buddhism may be growing at a more rapid rate than the Southern Baptist Convention. Indian migrants alone have included Hindus, Muslims, Jains, and Sikhs. Most of the immigrants from Southeast Asia and the Pacific Rim are Buddhists. In 2000 there were 24,358 Vietnamese in Louisiana, some of whom were Buddhists, some Confucian, and some Catholic. Georgia that year had

¹³ On the Catholic and Jewish experiences in the South as paradigms for new immigrants, see Charles H. Lippy, "Tactics for Survival: Religious Minorities," in *Religion and Public Life in the South*, 125-40.

46,132 Asian Indians, most of whom were Hindu or Sikh, and Atlanta had a population that included 10,000 Buddhists, 12,000 Hindus, and 30,000 Muslims. Recent estimates are that 26 percent of American Muslims live in the South. The Islamic story is especially complex in the South, given the earlier presence of the Nation of Islam among African Americans. Today, most Muslims in the South are African American or come from the Middle East, but those from South Asia represent a third of the region's Muslim population as well. Most major southern cities have significant Muslim communities, with rural areas of Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi also having smaller communities. Atlanta represents the diversity of Islam in the South, with fourteen Sunni mosques, four Shi'i mosques, and many Islamic centers such as those of the Nation of Islam. The American Muslim Society, one of the largest Muslim organizations serving African Americans, is also located in Atlanta.¹⁴

Special attention should be given to the Hispanic immigration to the South. Texas and south Florida have long had populations from Latin America and the Caribbean that have helped shape the cultures of those states, and recent immigration has augmented the prominence of Latinos there. The new development, though, in the last ten years has been the large numbers of Hispanic who have come into the Deep South and the Atlantic Coast South following employment opportunities. North Carolina, for example, had almost four hundred thousand Latinos in the 2000 census, an increase of over 550 percent in ten years. The cultural presence of Latinos makes itself visible in southern places through increased numbers of Mexican restaurants, Hispanic groceries, the sounds from Spanish language radio and television stations, and bilingual signs. Many Latinos started out attending Catholic churches with little heritage of Latino influence, but Catholic churches in southern cities from Richmond, Virginia, to Jackson, Mississippi, Little Rock, and Shreveport now offer Spanish-language masses, as do Protestant churches, from Episcopalians to Pentecostals. Pentecostals have been especially effective in proselytizing Hispanics, both in their native countries and in the South.¹⁵

¹⁴ For statistics on growth of minorities in the South, see Charles H. Lippy, "From Angels to Zen: Religion and Culture in the Contemporary South" and Tweed, "Our Lady of Guadeloupe Meets the Confederate Monument," in Norman, *Religion in the Contemporary South*, 123-37, 142-43.

¹⁵ Thomas A. Tweed, "Buddhism," Steven Ramey, "Hinduism," and Donna L.

For Catholics, the influx of Latinos has created new combinations, because Hispanic style is different from that of Anglo Catholics in the South. It combines traditional aspects of Roman Catholicism with features that date back to religious expressions of the native peoples of Mesoamerica. As Charles Lippy notes, "In Latino masses, congregants say the rosary before or during the liturgy, there are lighted candles or offerings to the Virgin near the altar, and parishioners sometimes bring objects for priests to bless—all different customs from white southern Catholic tradition in the Southeast." Susan Bales notes that "the Catholicism that Latinos bring with them to the South seems foreign in many ways to both Protestants and many native southern Catholics alike."¹⁶ This situation replicates the earlier experience of Catholics from differing ethnic traditions who came to the South over a period of several generations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, creating tensions along with the possibilities of new cultural interaction. As then, some Anglo and Latino communities within the Catholic church are separate and parallel, divided by language and ethnicity.

These new ethnic influences have brought increasing diversity to the region's existing Protestant and Catholic churches. The census of 2000 showed that 12,600 Koreans and 19,000 Chinese were living in North Carolina, most of whom were Protestant. A 1999 estimate was that Texas had over 180 Asian Baptist churches; the largest Asian church in that state was a Presbyterian church in Richardson, with twelve hundred members. Southern evangelicals have launched missionary outreaches among immigrants, especially Latinos, who sometimes convert and join Pentecostal churches or become Baptists. Still,

Meigs-Jacques and R. Kevin Jacques, "Islam," in *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South*, 2nd ed. (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2005); Sam Britt, "Asian Religions," and Steven Ramey, "Islam," in *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, vol. 1, 29–34, 79–81; Steven W. Ramey, "Temples and Beyond: Varieties of Hindu Experiences in the South," in Norman, *Religion in the Contemporary South*, 207–24; Gary Laderman, *Religious Atlanta: Religious Diversity in the Centennial Olympic City* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996); Thomas A. Tweed, *Buddhism and BBQ: A Guide to Buddhist Temples in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The Buddhism in North Carolina Project, 2001).

¹⁶ Susan Ridgely Bales, "Sweet Tea and Rosary Beads: An Analysis of Southern Catholicism at the Millennium," in Norman, *Religion in the Contemporary South*, 198; Marie Friedman Marquardt, "Latino Religion," in *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, vol. 1, 85–89; Manuel A. Vasquez and Marie Friedman Marquardt, *Globalizing the Sacred: Religion across the Americas* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2003).

the Catholic church has been the main beneficiary of the Hispanic immigration, a challenge to bishops and local churches to serve new populations that often have particular language and social service needs. A recent report showed that North Carolina included two of the four dioceses in the nation with the highest percentage of Hispanic Catholic growth.¹⁷

These recent changes have created a new context for religious life in the South, which is reflected in the changing physical, social, and symbolic landscapes of the region. Evangelical Protestants have long marked the South as their own through pervasive white clapboard churches in the countryside and more substantial brick edifices in cities. Crosses are a part of the visual landscape, whether the giant concrete crosses of the injured coal miner Harrison Mayes who devoted much of his life to erecting them, the more recent three crosses evoking the crucifixion and scattered on roads throughout the region, or the small, poignant roadside crosses marking automobile deaths in many southern states. "Jesus Saves," "Get Right with God," and "Prepare to Meet Thy God" boil down southern theology to simple statements that communicate the faith across the landscape.¹⁸

All of these traditional visual markings of the southern landscape remain, but they are joined by newer symbols reflecting the hard-to-miss presence of new faiths. One can find a Hindu temple in every state of the old Confederacy, as well as in the Kentucky bluegrass, in the West Virginia mountains, and on the Oklahoma plains. The largest in the South is probably the one in the Riverdale section of Atlanta, built in the late 1990s at a cost of two million dollars. Jains have brought their distinctive Hinduism with them to Atlanta, Charlotte, Houston, and Memphis, as well as such smaller cities as Augusta, Georgia, and Greenville, South Carolina, and their temples in those places sponsor festivals on Jain holy days. Jains also participate in pan-Indian temple activities and sometimes find themselves with a diminished Jain identity in exchange for a generalized Hindu identity, as Old World differences drop away when living in the shadow of

¹⁷ David M. Reimers, "Asian Immigrants in the South," in Cobb and Stueck, *Globalization and the American South*, 125.

¹⁸ Charles Reagan Wilson, *Judgment and Grace in Dixie: Southern Faiths from Faulkner to Elvis* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995); Tweed, "Our Lady of Guadeloupe Meets the Confederate Monument," 143–46, and Lippy, "From Angels to Zen," in Norman, *Religion in the Contemporary South*, 128–29.

the steeples around them. The region has over 60 Hindu temples or cultural centers, and Buddhist temples outnumber Hindu sites. These sacred spaces often reflect the ethnic diversity of Buddhists coming to the South. Upstate South Carolina, for example, hosts four Theravadan temples, including two Cambodian sites in Spartanburg County, a Laotian temple in the bustling automobile factory city of Spartanburg itself, and a Sri Lankan temple outside of Greenville. Sikhism is one of the most recently emerged world religions, beginning in the 1400s in the Punjab region of northern India, and it too has come south, with *Gurdwaras* (temples) in Austin, Dallas, and Houston, and rapidly growing communities in not only south Florida but Columbia, South Carolina, Augusta, Georgia, and Charlotte, North Carolina. Many of these groups build new structures, often with traditional architectural elements from their religious heritages, such as the Theravadan Buddhist monastery with a traditional curved roof near Bolivia, North Carolina. Many Buddhists, though, worship in converted homes and renovated churches once belonging to the region's evangelicals.¹⁹

Latino influences on Catholicism are particularly dramatic illustrations of how new symbols, symbolic spaces, and rituals are transforming the religious landscape of the South. Mexican Americans dedicated the Shrine of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle in the Rio Grande Valley in the 1950s. As the Hispanic population has grown through Texas and surrounding states, this site has become the nation's most visited Catholic pilgrim shrine, attracting over one million of the devoted each year. At the other end of the South, the Cuban community of south Florida celebrates Our Lady of Charity at the sixth most popular Catholic pilgrimage spot in the United States. Our Lady of Charity is the patroness of Cuba, and the shrine has particular meaning for Cuban exiles, who erected it soon after leaving Castro's Cuba. Both sites attract the spiritually hungry who combine orthodox Catholicism with folk practices associated with, in the first case, *curanderismo* (which are healing rites that go back to Mesoamerican practices), and in the other case, the African-derived, Caribbean-based religion of Santería. More generally, Mexican immigrants bring their patroness, Our Lady of Guadeloupe, to the southern communities for ritual celebrations on her feast day each December. As Tom Tweed has noted, processions of the devout some-

¹⁹ Britt, "Asian Religions," in Wilson, *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, vol. 1, 32-33.

times carry banners or statues with Our Lady of Guadeloupe's image from the local Catholic church through the South's town squares, right past the Confederate monuments that symbolized the South's historic identity. The priests deliver homilies about the issues of the local Latino community, and the celebrants consume traditional meals of pork, tortillas, and beans.²⁰

Other signs of a changing landscape can be seen as well. A Presbyterian church in DeKalb County, Georgia, one of the most ethnically diverse counties in the nation now, has a banner in front of it reading, "in Christ" in four languages: English, Korean, Spanish, and Asian Indian." The Buddhist temple on Highway 377 north of Keller, Texas, contains a twenty-foot golden image, which the worshippers there believe is the largest statue of Buddha in the United States. Home devotionals have taken on a new prominence behind closed doors in the South. Hindu spirituality is based primarily in the home, and even people of modest means designate a space, "ranging from a nook in a corner to an entire room, set apart for *pūja* (worship)." These become new sacred spaces of the South, not part of the region's public culture but its private spirituality.²¹

The role of the Baha'i religion in South Carolina illustrates how a world religion can take root in a particular place in the South. The state has over 20,000 Baha'is, obviously a small number in comparison to the Baptists, but it is one of the fastest growing religious communities in the state and represents one of the largest communities of that faith in the nation. Baha'i grew out of the Babi faith, founded in Persia in 1844, and stresses such ideas as the unity of humanity and religions, gender equality, elimination of prejudice, and a universal language. Bill Willis, secretary of the Baha'i Spiritual Assembly of Conway, South Carolina, calls the faith "the cornerstone of the new civilization." Charlestonian Louis G. Gregory introduced the Baha'i faith into the South, after becoming a believer in 1909. This son of a slave campaigned tirelessly to spread the faith and became internationally known, while another prophet of Baha'ism, Indian-born Meher Baba, is a well known symbol in the region around Myrtle Beach in north-

²⁰ Thomas A. Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile: Diaspora Religion at a Cuban Catholic Shrine in Miami* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Marquardt, "Latino Religion," in *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, vol. 1, 87.

²¹ Reimers, "Asian Immigrants in the South," 125.

ern coastal South Carolina, the stronghold of the faith. The Louis G. Gregory Baha'i Institute in Hemingway, South Carolina, serves much of the South, while the Meher Baba Spiritual Center, which Meher Baba himself visited in 1958, works with the many converts in South Carolina and attracts worldwide visitors. Baha'i-owned radio station WLGI represents a distinctive voice in coastal Carolina, changing the South's aural landscape. Just as Catholics and Jews participated in public ceremonies celebrating the Confederate heroes after the Civil War as a symbol of their being southerners, so the Baha'i began sponsoring a Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration in Horry County, South Carolina in January 1990, a sign of their embrace of a key ritual event in their southern place.²²

Living in the South, within an evangelically dominated cultural context, has caused some new religious groups on the southern scene to retreat into separate spaces and create distinctive institutions to preserve older identities. Such organizations function as support groups as new immigrants settle in, but also provide ongoing services. The Delta Insight Group in Memphis, for example, formed an organization called Dharma Memphis to assist with the rapid increase in Asian Buddhists, many of whom arrived in the city in the 1990s. Some of these new religious groups have defined their identities as Hindu or Buddhist more intentionally after coming to the South. Hinduism allows for a plurality of belief systems, but living in the South has led many Hindus to accentuate the monotheistic perspective. As Sam Britt notes, "In matters of theology and worship, Hindus in the United States are more determined to acknowledge what draws them together than what divides them." Charles Lippy notes that Buddhist centers across the South function much "like ethnic parishes in Catholic circles generations earlier," serving not only as "religious centers helping sustain the faith brought from a land of origins," but as "cultural centers committed to keeping alive the way of life that gave meaning to generations within the family heritage." Southern religious culture has expectations about church attendance, and this sentiment has rubbed off on the new immigrants. "Because the temples seem to have always been there and signs of the plausibility of Hindu ways pervade

²² Lippy, "From Angels to Zen," 126; Preston L. McKeever-Floyd, "Masks of the Sacred: Religious Pluralism in South Carolina," in *Religion in South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 159-61.

all of public life in India, identification as a Hindu does not require the same commitment to temples and their work that it does in the United States, especially in the South, where there are few cultural props that buttress Hindu identity," Lippy adds. Vietnamese Buddhists in Raleigh typically meet each Sunday morning to read scriptures and meditate together, as distinct from back in Vietnam where they came together only a few times a month and for festival occasions. Going to temple on Sunday in Raleigh replicates the Sunday ritual of their Christian neighbors, allowing these Buddhists to blend in with the larger religious culture and take a step toward assimilation to the region and nation.²³

How have native southern whites and blacks, the creators of a biracial southern culture, reacted to the new religious context of the South? A recent public opinion survey found that nearly half of respondents in the South answered that they felt "connected to people around the world." Fewer than a third viewed themselves mainly in terms of their differences from non-southern Americans. Some southerners have become converts to new ways, and Elvis Presley is an unlikely but good example. Elvis lived and died before globalization hit the South, although we might claim him as an early commercial export in the global economy. In the 1960s, though, Presley began reading about Eastern religions, which was an extraordinary change for this Pentecostal-raised, Deep South performer. In March 1965 he had a profound religious experience in the Arizona desert, later saying he saw the face of God in the clouds. He began visiting an Asian-based religious institute, the Self-Realization Fellowship Lake Shore Retreat in California, and he told one friend he was thinking of becoming a monk. The idea of his turning in his blue suede shoes for the monk's robe seems startling, but he found a brief serenity for his restless spiritual seeking through meetings with the Fellowship's leader, Sri Daya Mata. Presley had to go to California for this experience, but today he could have gone somewhere closer to Graceland, to the Southern Dharma Retreat Center in North Carolina or one of several such places in the South. In any event, Presley's conversion to Eastern religion went only so far, as he embraced his southern gospel music heritage for solace toward the end of his life. One might also mention Coleman Barks as another native southerner who has embraced a more diverse religiosity than

²³ Sam Britt, "Asian Religions," 28-34; Lippy, "Tactics for Survival," 132-33.

he inherited. He is the translator of the poetry of Rumi, the Sufi poet. Barks was raised in Chattanooga and lives now in Georgia.²⁴

One of the results of this new religious pluralism in the South is the movement toward tolerance, and interfaith groups promoting religious toleration have appeared, such as Partners in Dialogue in Columbia, South Carolina, and Faiths Together in Houston. The Festival of Faiths, an inter-religious celebration of religious tolerance, took place in Memphis in 2003 and included a presentation by Arun Gandhi, Mohandas Gandhi's grandson. Atlanta's Sikh community staged its first Festival of Peace event in 2003. On the other hand, as Charles Lippy notes of the Muslims, "The culture of the 'Bible Belt' has seemed an antagonistic environment for building a strong and growing public presence for Islam." As a result, Muslims typically keep a low profile in southern places, perhaps only an exaggeration of a common American situation for them.²⁵

The development of a new religious pluralism in the South has coincided with the emergence of an aggressive new fundamentalist movement. The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has long been a southern folk institution, and no denomination was more important in preserving the sense of a southern identity over such an extensive time period, dating back to the 1840s. Since the late 1970s, though, its members have engaged in internecine warfare, leading to fundamentalists taking over institutional control of the Southern Baptist Convention. Since the 1980s, the SBC has stressed rigidity in doctrine and ideology, emphasizing the inerrancy of the Scriptures and moving away from traditional Baptist support for separation of church and state to advocate, among other government-directed social causes, prayer in schools. The SBC traditionally stressed centrally the mission of converting the world, but the new SBC seems to want to make the world behave better and think more like the SBC. The conservative religious right political movement is kin to the strict fundamentalist theology of the new SBC. It reflects an effort to impose on society and church institutions a discipline that the faithful believe once existed in the small towns and rural society of the earlier South, up until the dramatic social changes in the decades after 1960. The rise of the religious right

²⁴ Peter Guralnik, *Careless Love: The Unmaking of Elvis Presley* (Boston: Little Brown, 1999), 175-77, 195-96, 209, 363.

²⁵ Lippy, "From Angels to Zen," 129; Lippy, "Tactics for Survival," 135-36; Britt, "Asian Religions," 29.

has been a national movement, but it has been led by such southern leaders as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and Ralph Reed. Southerners responded well to the goals of groups such as the Moral Majority, the Religious Roundtable, and the Christian Coalition, whose agendas self-consciously referenced "traditional values," especially related to family. The new religions that have come recently to the South represent a challenge to this fundamentalist outlook, since they cannot be seen as part of southern tradition. The fundamentalist agenda focuses much energy on opposing behavior considered immoral, but the new pluralism also includes diverse belief, which can be a target of this aggressive outlook.²⁶

In surveying fundamentalist movements and outlooks around the world, Martin E. Marty has characterized the conservative Protestant movement in the United States since the late 1970s as an example of a crusading fundamentalism. The earlier fundamentalist movement of the 1920s sought separation from a wicked world, a view coming out of premillennialist thought, but the more recent surge of conservative Protestantism has shifted to a postmillennialist view that Christian believers must fundamentally reform the world before Christ's second coming. In the 1950s, for example, Jerry Falwell said, "I am a fundamentalist, and that means I am a soul-winner and a separatist." After the moral and social crises and turmoil in society during the 1960s and 1970s, the Moral Majority emerged in the late 1970s as a symbol of the determination to, as Marty says, "protect the next generation of Christians by concerted political efforts to 'repeal' or 'roll back' secular humanism." Falwell and others "pushed Protestant fundamentalism toward a new, world-conquering pattern of political activism in reaction to the threatening pluralism of belief and lifestyle that appeared to be overtaking 'Judeo-Christian' America." Note that many Jews and Catholics had now come inside the tent, at least in terms of their support for conservative social causes, most notably opposition to abortion, which has created a surprising coalition across the lines of sometimes antagonistic religious traditions. Still, this aggressive new crusading orthodoxy in the South represents primarily a resurgence of an older mission-driven evangelical Protestantism, determined to use the earlier model of the evangelically dominated

²⁶ David T. Morgan, *The New Crusades, The New Holy Land: Conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention, 1969-1991* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1996).

South to reclaim and dominate society. This spirit will continue to be part of the southern religious context, along with the new pluralism that comes from the arrival of new religions and new ethnicities. As Marty suggests, contemporary American fundamentalism must also be seen in its global context, as part of a resurgence of fundamentalist social and theological sentiment seen also in Iran, Israel, India, and other places experiencing modernization. The South, from one perspective, is part of the post-colonial world, exploited historically by the economic and political forces of Western Europe and the northern industrial structure, so this southern regional fundamentalism ties the South to far-flung places resisting Western secularization and modernization.²⁷

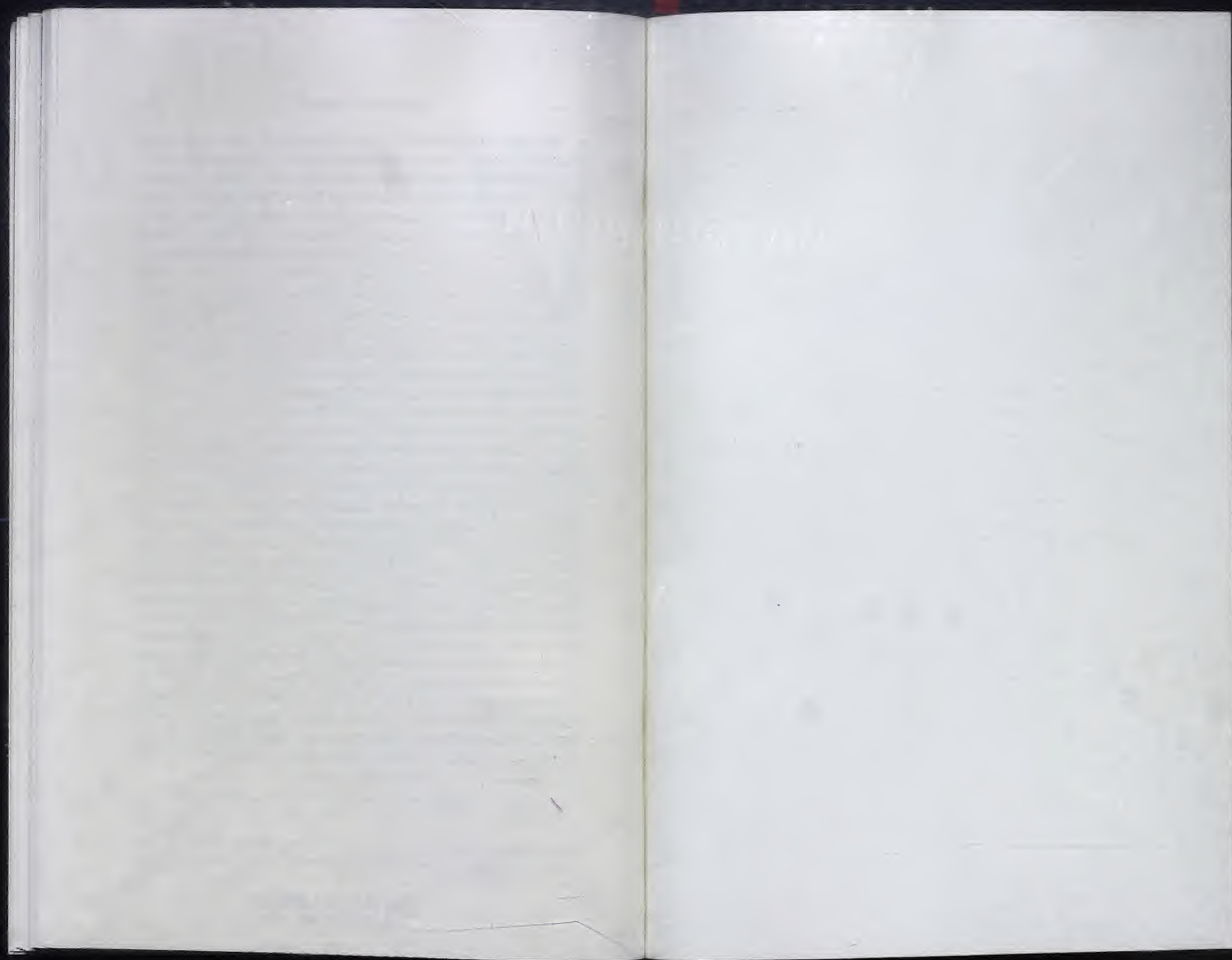
The southern religious context has surely changed, creating tensions, fears, and opportunities. The adjustment of particular religious groups to the South and of southern evangelicals and other southern Protestants to these new religions has not always been easy. As Susan Bales has noted, "sweet tea and rosary beads do not easily go together." Her use of those two iconic symbols reflects that religion and region are still intertwined, even if some new southerners might be sitting in front of an image of Our Lady of Guadeloupe while drinking that sweet tea and fingering the rosary. What could members of the Antioch Baptist Church in eastern North Carolina make of seeing saffron-robed Thai monks and their new Asian-style temple? "This area never had to deal with internationals before," observed a Baptist preacher there. "Then it was thrust into becoming an international town overnight." Indeed, the global economy has brought new peoples and new religions to the South, but the ramifications of globalization go far beyond the economy. While the dynamics of globalization attempt to remake the citizens of the world into a new type, local influences such as regional culture and identity continue to provide the on-the-ground setting for global activities. One globalization theorist characterizes globalization and localization as Janus-faced aspects of the same process. It can be called "glocalization," and the contemporary religious life of the South represents this complex process.²⁸

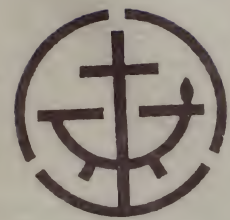
²⁷ Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms Comprehended, Volume 5 of the Fundamentalism Project* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 416.

²⁸ Quoted in Tweed, "Our Lady of Guadeloupe Meets the Confederate Monument," 147. "Glocalization" is used by Roland Robertson, in *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage Publications, 1992), 173-74.

The normative picture of traditional southern religion has been disrupted, and new forces are at work, but the result is a complex mixture of global and local. After economic changes related to globalization come cultural challenges, and, according to Bryan McNeal, "these changes are left to be managed by the communities they affect." The result in relation to religion seems to be breaking down barriers, creating complex new interactions between southern and global cultures. Anthropologist James Peacock sees a "grounded globalism" emerging in the South, as "world religions and world subjectivities are becoming grounded in local experience while locals contribute variously to global movements and experience." White and black Protestants go to the Southern Dharma Buddhist Retreat Center near Asheville, North Carolina, and learn meditation techniques to practice during the week, perhaps before attending Wednesday night prayer meeting—still, one might add, in racially segregated churches. Children of Sikhs are developing southern accents, dogwood blooms replace lotus blossom seals in Buddhist temples, and Hare Krishnas buy antebellum Natchez plantation mansions. A sign for the Southside Baptist Church in Martin, Tennessee, proclaims, "Sweeping the south with the love of Jesus Christ." The pastor of the church is Fady Al-Hagal. It's likely that soon the pork consumed by Latino celebrants of Our Lady of Guadeloupe feast day will be barbecue pork, but Latinos in North Carolina will worship with a vinegar-based sauce while those in Memphis will savor a tomato-based sauce, embracing continuing place differences within the South. Southeast Asian Indians in Mississippi now sponsor the Miss Indian Mississippi Beauty Pageant, a particularly visible adaptation to that state's culture. Perhaps the appropriate scene to end this meditation upon the religion of the American South in global perspective is to note the ceremony that took place at the University of South Carolina in the spring of 2002. Amidst the blooming azaleas and dogwood trees of the southern spring, Tibetan monks created a sand mandala on campus. Once the mandala was perfected, they dismantled it, gathered the bright colored sand, and then poured it into the Congaree River as a blessing for the region.²⁹

²⁹ McNeal, "Global Forces, Local Worlds," and Peacock, "The South and Grounded Globalism," in *The American South in a Global World*, 99, 273; Britt, "Asian Religions," 32, 34.





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A STUDY GUIDE

World Council of Churches, Geneva

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Introduction

An invitation

We invite you to join us in a study of what it means to be a Christian in a culturally, religiously and ideologically plural world. We hope that small groups of people in all our churches and in all parts of the world will accept our invitation and the study will be truly ecumenical. We also hope that we would be able to pursue this theological reflection within the context of a living dialogue with people of other faiths.

This invitation comes to you from the Dialogue Sub-unit of the World Council of Churches. In 1984, the Central Committee of the WCC accepted a recommendation of the working group on dialogue for a five-year study programme. Accordingly, the WCC's Dialogue Sub-unit launched the work with three meetings of people who represented a variety of cultural and confessional backgrounds. This booklet is the result of their efforts. It tells you what the purpose of the study is and how you may take part in it. An international consultation in 1989 will analyze the responses from around the world, and its findings will be shared with you and with all our churches.

A historical note

For a long time, people within the ecumenical movement have been trying to grasp the meaning of our obedience to the gospel in a world of many religions and cultures. The World Missionary Conferences at Edinburgh (1910), Jerusalem (1928) and Tambaram (1938) struggled to understand the significance of other faiths in relation to the gospel. When the International Missionary Council became part of the World Council of Churches in 1961, this concern was assigned to the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism.

In 1971 a separate sub-unit was formed to promote dialogue between people of living faiths. A major landmark in this sub-unit's development was the 1977 meeting at Chiang Mai, Thailand, where a group of Christians representing many different ecclesiastical traditions drew up *Guidelines on Dialogue*, which has become the basis of this type of work in the Sub-unit and the churches.

During the past few years, the Sub-unit has organized a number of Hindu-Christian, Muslim-Christian, Buddhist-Christian and Jewish-Christian dialogues at

international and regional levels. It has at the same time encouraged local dialogues. Occasionally, the Sub-unit gathered representatives of traditional religions and cultures for interaction and dialogue. Multilateral dialogues (involving people from several religions) took place in Ajaltoun (1970), Colombo (1974), and Mauritius (1983). All these gatherings have served to open a new mode of relating to people of living faiths and ideological convictions.

The present context

During the last few decades, questions about religious and cultural pluralism and the growing influence of secular and technological thinking have attracted renewed interest in the churches. Christian groups in predominantly Marxist societies are also seeking ways to enter into a new dialogue with their neighbours. Everywhere there is a fresh sense of urgency to build creative relationships. As interest in dialogue has grown, so has its actual practice, enabling various religious communities to understand one another better and to work more closely together.

People engaged in dialogue have felt their own faith challenged and deepened by the new dimensions of religious life which they have observed, and many find in inter-religious encounter a new impetus for doing theology and reviving spirituality. Communities in dialogue function as the leaven in the larger community, facilitating the creation of a society transcending religious barriers. This experience, however, has also provoked questions about some of our theological presuppositions about people of other faiths and their convictions. We stand at a historic moment when the Christian theological tradition must take full account of the experiences of those who have been living for centuries in religiously plural societies, as well as of the convictions of those who are newly stimulated by the broadening religious plurality of their surroundings. Our experience in dialogue suggests strongly that many of our "classical" theological assumptions need to be informed and challenged afresh by the new realities of our times.

The purpose of the study

This study is thus a response to the inescapable necessity of setting our theology in the context of contemporary religious plurality. Of course, its intention is not to provide answers to the complex theological questions involved in relating to the faith and witness of others. These issues have deeply divided Christian theology and no definitive solutions have emerged. Distinctions based on natural and special revelation and theories which project certain traditions as preparation for evangelization have proved inadequate, but a fresh exploration could well lead us to the discovery — or rediscovery — within our heritage of the spiritual indicators we need for the way forward.

Nor is it our purpose to provide information about other faiths. It is, rather, to promote an awareness of our neighbours as people of living faiths, whose beliefs and practices should become integral elements in our theological thinking about the world and the human community. In other words, this study is a call to Christians to make theological sense of the faiths of their neighbours. Hitherto, Christian theological reflection has not taken this seriously, but when the faith of our neighbours informs the way we observe and understand our own beliefs, we are bound to be challenged to seek new dimensions of our own faith. In so doing we

may also discover our neighbours in a new light, and so learn to live with them in closer community.

We cannot of course be unmindful of the many situations in the world where religious communities are caught up in situations of conflict. Nor can we ignore the rise of conservative, at times militant, expressions of religion disrupting the life of communities which have for centuries lived in peace. We must recognize that religions and religious movements have often been coopted in the past — and are coopted today — by demonic powers in the world.

We must also recognize the wide gulf between theory and practice. The ideals enshrined in religious scriptures are not always evident in the day-to-day life of their followers. We have little reason to approach religious traditions in a mood of romantic enthusiasm.

Our study, however, is an attempt, to consider the religious quest of humankind in its better manifestations. Even those of us who have legitimate reservations about certain aspects of religions should learn to affirm and to relate to what is of value in the life and witness of their devotees. That is why the study is not so much about other faiths as our own; it is about how we may understand our faith better as we live with friends and neighbours who follow other faiths. All religions have a theology of other "religions", whether expressed or not, and today we are all under pressure to review it, relate more positively to people of other faiths and grow in togetherness and community.

We invite you, then, to join us in this exploration, in the common quest for a relevant and meaningful relationship with people of other faiths. The task is not easy; it takes courage both to think and relate in new ways. We hope that you will enjoy being part of the company of Christians engaged in this search in many parts of the world.

A Note on Method

Study groups

This study is designed to be carried out by small groups of people who will commit themselves to meet regularly for a few months. The groups should include men and women, clergy and laity, and people who might bring a variety of theological perspectives. In those settings where it is possible, the study process would be enriched if the group is ecumenical in composition. One or more members should be assigned to take detailed notes of the discussions to enable the group, at the conclusion of the study process, to communicate its findings and insights to the Sub-unit on Dialogue.

The process of study

The study has nine major sections, and each section has from one to three study units. Each study unit in most cases has three parts:

- 1) texts that introduce the topic;
- 2) a short commentary to focus on the issues raised by the texts;
- 3) suggestions and questions for discussion.

Because there are many different contexts in which the study will be undertaken, the groups are invited to add their own texts, commentaries, and questions, if that will help clarify particular issues that are relevant in their own situations.

The study groups will bring different contexts and backgrounds to the theological discoveries study. In exceptional cases, there may be some groups, especially in seminary contexts, that may wish to do more outside reading. They may wish to extend their actual knowledge of people of other faiths through additional study, or they may want to do further reading in contemporary thinking on the theology of religions. A few bibliographical references are provided at the back of this book, but relevant readings will have to be decided upon locally.

Involvement of people of other faiths

It is important and integral to this study that it includes some common experiences of dialogue with people of other faiths in our own localities. The study will enable some participants to articulate theological discoveries that have emerged from many years of inter-religious relationship and dialogue. For others,

this focus on the relation of Christians to people of other faiths may be a new one. Thus, your group should decide how, in the process of this study, you will include the first-hand experience and testimony of people of other faiths in your own community. Here are some of the ways in which this could be done:

- A. The group may invite people from other religious traditions to participate in one or two of the unit discussions, making clear the nature and purpose of the study.
- B. Alternatively or in addition, the group may plan, together with friends from other faiths, a series of two or three special sessions ranging across the general topics of the study and including others that are important in your community. This will enable the members of the study group to have some common experiences and references in the study discussions. In the process of the study, stay in touch with those whom you come to know.
- C. The group should arrange with neighbours of other faiths to visit their places of worship, or community gathering, if this is possible in your area. Again, discuss the purposes of the study and prepare yourselves, with the help of friends of other faiths, for such visits.

While the study is primarily an occasion for Christian theological reflection on the significance of other faiths and our neighbours of other faiths, it should not be pursued in isolation. It is important that a special effort is made, as an integral part of the study, to engage the group as a whole in some common experiences with people of other faiths.



STUDY I

Living in a Religiously Plural World

1. Texts

Listen to these stories of how three persons became aware of religious pluralism in their own life situations:

- a) *In Sudbury, Canada, the pastor of a local church has just returned to his study in his new pastoral charge. He himself is of East Indian origin. Suddenly, he stops a moment, sure that he is hearing Sanskrit chanting. He shakes his head and wonders if he is hearing things, but then walks towards the source of the chanting in the basement church hall. There he finds the local Hindu community holding their weekly service, and is invited to join in their celebration. Later, in discussing his discovery with the elders of his church, he finds out that the Hindu community has been using the church hall for over 12 years and that it was such an accepted part of their community life that they had forgotten to mention it as anything special to their new pastor. The Ganges has truly come to the north shore of Lake Superior.*
- b) *I was born in a Muslim community in Kenya, but my parents were Christians. So we as their children inherited the Christian faith and lived in it all through our lives. My sisters, my brother and I love the Lord Jesus as our personal saviour. This did not make us hate our fellow brothers and sisters in the Islamic faith, but we loved them as equally as ourselves. Mother and father reminded us that we must love them all the time. Also some of my extended family belonged to the Islamic faith. I lived with relations who were Muslims...*
- c) *My grandmother, when she came to the United States from Sweden in 1911, had only one book: the Bible in Swedish. She had never met a Hindu or Muslim. She had never read the Bhagavad Gita or heard the Qur'an recited. Although I went as a student to India to study Sanskrit and Hinduism, she could not fully grasp what I was up to. Until the day she died, she thought of me and*

introduced me to her friends as "my grand-daughter, who is a missionary in India". What else, in her worldview, could I possibly be doing there? Without diminishing in the least the integrity of her faith, I must say that to be a Christian is, for me, very different from what it was for her. I have lived for years in India, in the sacred city of Banaras. I have seen the faith of Hindus, as they embrace the joys of life and struggle with its sorrows. I have read the Bhagavad Gita over and over, and have found new insight there. I simply cannot bracket these things and put them out of my mind and heart when I consider what it means to be a Christian today, living in relationship with neighbours, teachers, and loved ones who are Hindu.

2. Comment

These three stories illustrate how religious pluralism and its consequences became real in the lives of three persons. A great number of Christians have lived for centuries in religiously plural societies. Today, as more and more communities and nations become multi-religious, we as Christians need to respond thoughtfully and faithfully to the fact that many of our neighbours, with whom we live and work, live their lives by other faiths.

In places that have become newly multi-religious, Christians are reacting to the new situation in a number of ways. Some simply ignore the changes around them. They continue their previous forms of community life and worship as if they were unaware of the transformation around them. Or they choose to move to another neighbourhood or town, where they will not have to face the issue. In some places Christians feel threatened and become hostile to neighbours of other faiths. They try to make things difficult for them in the community. They may make it hard for a local Muslim group to build a new mosque or for the local Hindus to hold a festival. Often, however, the attitude of Christians is one of indifferent tolerance. They are outwardly pleasant but inwardly indifferent.

In societies where Christians have lived with people of other faiths for centuries, especially as minorities, attitudes are shaped by long historical experience. The relationship is sometimes characterized by defensiveness and a polemical spirit. More often, however, living relationships have led to the sharing of common life and discoveries of similarities in religious experience. The affirmation of common cultural and national identity has helped transcend confessional barriers in daily life.

In situations of religious conflict, Christians may be tempted to isolate themselves from the rest of society and develop a minority-centred attitude, socially, politically and religiously. Others may try to accept any experience of suffering they encounter as a minority in a spirit of "evangelical" humility and love, faithful to their vocation as a church, but at the same time struggle together with their fellow citizens for justice and peace.

All the three stories deal with situations where Christians have been brought into contact with people who live by other faiths. These contacts have the potential to enrich their relationship with them. For the members of the Sudbury church there is relationship with Hindus, in fact and in potential, because a Hindu community worships in the church hall. To the African Christian in Kenya, life with Muslims is part of family life and relationships. For the grandmother of the woman from North

America, she could do nothing better in India than be a missionary. But she herself has been challenged and changed by the Hindus she has met and come to know. Many Christians throughout the world have similar experiences. They remain firmly grounded in the Christian faith, and yet are moved, enriched and enlivened by the insights and the faith of others who are not Christian. How has Christian theology been able to speak to those who have had such experiences?

Theological responses to religious pluralism have been varied. Some have maintained what might be called an "exclusivist" Christian response: that there is truth and salvation only in the way of Christ. Others have developed what might be called an "inclusivist" view: that the Christ event is cosmic and inclusive, and Christ is present and at work even among those who may not know Christ as such. In this view, people of other faiths are included in God's plan of salvation through the grace of Christ. Still other Christians take a third position which might be called a "pluralist" view: that God, or what followers of some other religions call "reality", can be known in many different ways. Those who take this view see the activity of the Creator God within the plurality of the world. They seek to discern the activity of the Spirit even beyond the boundaries of the church. And they affirm God's saving activity in many places, within many traditions and in many ways.

3. Discussion and questions

Begin by describing your local religious situation. What are the different religious communities in your town, in your area, in your country? Make notes, perhaps on a blackboard, about your local situation.

Think together about the world situation. Map the "religious world" as best as you can. What do you think is the percentage of Christians in the world? Jews? Muslims? Hindus? Buddhists? (See page 53 for answers.) Where do people of different religious traditions seem to live together in harmony? in conflict?

★ Think about your own church or churches. What has been done in your church to understand and relate to neighbours of other faiths? Describe any initiatives that have taken place to relate to or work with them.

Think about your own personal experience. What kinds of contacts have you had with people of other religious traditions? Share the experiences so that as you begin your work as a group you have a sense of your collective history and experience with people of other faiths. What are the attitudes, or theological positions, held in relation to other faiths? Have your attitudes changed over the years? How do you assess them now, as you pursue this study? What is the attitude of neighbours of other faiths to the Christian community in your place? (after, talk)



STUDY II

Creation

1. Texts

Creation is a basic theme of the Bible. In fact the Bible begins with the story of creation. Many of the Psalms celebrate the theme. Creation is also a basic assumption in the New Testament which ends with a vision of a new creation.

Creation, however, is also a basic theme in many other religious traditions. Here are some examples:

a) From the Shinto thought:

*The grains that grow,
The myriad trees and grasses —
All are blessings
Of the Great Kami of the Sun
Who lightens the Heaven.*

*But for the blessings
of the Kami
Of Heaven and earth,
could we live
One day, one night?*

*The food that sustains life,
our clothes, our dwelling —
They are the blessings
of our Ruler
of our Kami.*

Motoori Norinaga

Tsunetsugu Muraoka, *Studies in Shinto Thought*,
Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, 1964, p.157.

- b) The following text from the ancient and influential Chinese classic, the *Tao Te Ching*, emphasizes the universal principle, Tao, the Way, that undergirds all created order:

*There was something formless yet complete,
That existed before heaven and earth;
Without sound, without substance,
Dependent on nothing, unchanging,
All-pervading, unfailing.
One may think of it as the mother of all things under heaven.
Its true name we do not know;
"Way" is the by-name that we give it.
Were I forced to say to what class of things it belongs
I should call it Great.*

*Tao Te Ching XXV, from Arthur Waley,
The Way and its Power, New York, Grove Press, 1958.*

- c) From the Pacific Islands of Polynesia, there is this story of creation by God, called Ta'aroa:

*He existed, Ta'aroa was his name,
In the immensity (space)
There was no sea, there was no man.
Above, Ta'aroa calls.
Existing alone, he became the universe.
Ta'aroa is the origin, the rocks.
Ta'aroa is the sands.
It is thus that he is named.
Ta'aroa is the light;
Ta'aroa is within;
Ta'aroa is the germ.
Ta'aroa is beneath;
Ta'aroa is firm,
Ta'aroa is wise.
He created the land of Hawaii,
Hawaii the great and sacred,
As a body or shell for Ta'aroa....*

*E.S. Craighill Handy, Polynesian Religion, Bernice P. Bishop
Museum Bulletin 34, Honolulu, Bishop Museum Press, 1927.
Reproduced in Charles Long, Alpha: the Myths of Creation,
New York, Braziller, 1963.*

- d) The understanding of creation is also revealed in prayers to the Creator, as in this modern Zoroastrian prayer:

*Thou, dear Ahura Mazda, art the Master Planner, the Lord of all Creation; the
Essence of Boundless Time and the very Spirit of Truth and Goodness. Thou art
All-Wise and All-Knowing. Not a leaf falls but Thou knowest it. Thou tellest the*

*number of trees and the leaves upon them. Thou knowest the number of
particles of sand on any seashore and the number of stars overhead. Thou
knowest me better than I know myself.*

*Quoted in "Learning from Other Faiths", George Appleton,
Third Lambeth Interfaith Lecture, 1981, p.2.*

- e) This Hindu text is from the Svetasvatara Upanishad which, according to many interpreters, celebrates the Personal God as Ultimate Reality:

*The One who rules over every single source,
In whom this whole world comes together and dissolves,
The Lord, the blessing-giver, God adorable —
By revering Him one goes for ever to His peace.*

*More minute than the minute, in the midst of confusion
The Creator of all, of manifold forms,
The One embracer of the universe —
By knowing Him as kindly one attains peace forever.*

*By knowing as kindly Him who is hidden in all things,
Exceedingly fine, like the cream that is finer than butter,
The One embracer of the universe —
By knowing God one is released from all fetters.*

*His form is not to be beheld.
No one-soever sees Him with the eye,
They who thus know Him with heart and mind
As abiding in the heart, become immortal.*

*From R.E. Hume, The Thirteen Principal Upanishads,
London, Oxford, University Press, 1971, pp. 404-405.*

2. Comment

The creation stories in different religious traditions have a variety of functions in their total belief systems. In the Shinto text there is emphasis on creation (nature) as the expression of the benevolent presence of the divine with the whole of nature. In the Taoist text, on the other hand, the focus is on the principle (Tao) that governs all life calling on the whole of creation, including humanity, to be in a harmonious relationship. In the Polynesian account of creation, Ta'aroa seems to create the universe out of his very self. The Svetasvatara Upanishad tells of a Creator who is at once supreme and the very essence of all things. He is not only a principle or reality, but a kindly God, whom one can adore and worship.

3. Discussion and questions

Study the biblical stories of creation found in Genesis 1 and 2, perhaps looking also at a hymn to the Creator, such as that found in Psalm 104.

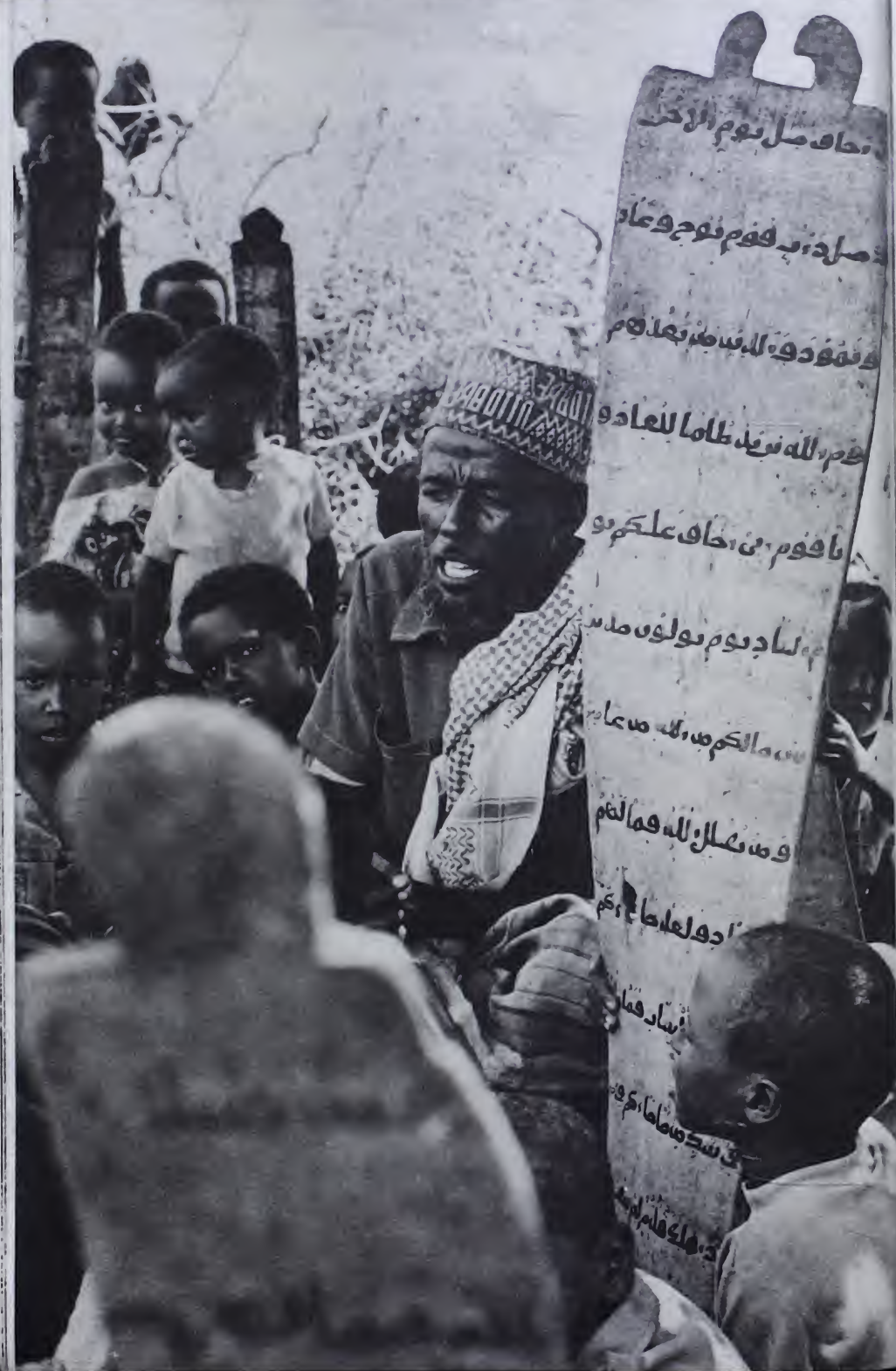
Discuss your own understandings of creation, with the input and insights drawn from these and similar accounts of creation in other traditions. This might be a

8 *My Neighbour's Faith — and Mine*

session to which you may want to invite a person or persons of other faiths to discuss with them their understanding of creation.

- a) What is a story of creation? Why do people tell stories of creation? What do you think is the purpose of such stories? How do such stories or accounts shape our attitudes towards one another as human beings, and towards the world of nature?
- b) What does it mean to understand God as the parent of humankind as a whole? What does this suggest for our relations with and attitudes towards people of other faiths?
- c) What do the various accounts of creation, including our own, tell us of the natural world and humanity's relation to nature? Do these views help us to understand better and deal more effectively with the ecological crisis?

NOTES



STUDY III

Scriptures

1. Texts

Almost all of the major religious traditions of the world have scriptures, either written down or transmitted in oral tradition. These are seen as the sources of their faith, and often as directly revealed by the Divine. Here are some statements about scriptures, both from the scriptures themselves and from adherents of the traditions:

- a) *Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write these words, for according to these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote upon the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten commandments*

Ex. 34:27-28

A rabbinic midrash:

Can there be a sale in which the seller sells himself along with the object he sells? God says, "I sold you my Torah, and with it I, as it were, sold myself." The matter is like a king who had an only daughter, and another king sought her and got her in marriage. The father said, "My daughter is an only child: I cannot be parted from her, and yet to say, Do not take her away, is also impossible, for she is your wife. Do me, therefore, this kindness: whithersoever you go, prepare for me a chamber that I may dwell with you, for I cannot forsake my daughter." So God says to Israel, "I have given you my Torah; I cannot be separated from her. Yet I cannot say to you, Do not take her. Therefore in every place whither you go, make me a house wherein I may dwell."... When a man buys a desirable object in the market, does he usually buy also its owner? But God, when he gave the Torah to Israel, said, "With the Torah you, as it were, take also me."

Exodus Rabbah, Terumah 33.1.6,
translation in C. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology*,
Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1963.

- b) *It is as from a fire laid with damp fuel, clouds of smoke separately issue forth, so lo, verily, from this great Being (Brahman) has been breathed forth that which is Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, and Atharva Veda.*

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 2.4.10 in A.O. Hume, trans.,
The Thirteen Principal Upanishads.

The Vedas are called Sruti (that which is heard), while the rest of the sacred writings are known as Smriti (that which is remembered). Great sages and seers are said to have heard the eternal truths of religion and to have left a record of them for the benefit of others. The Vedas are therefore said to be eternal, their composers being only the channels through which the revelations of the Supreme have come. Accordingly, the Sruti forms the supreme authority for Hinduism.

D.S. Sarma, "The Nature and History of Hinduism",
in K.W. Morgan, ed., *The Religion of the Hindus*, p.7.

- c) *In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate
Recite! In the Name of thy Lord who created,
created Man of a blood-clot.
Recite! And thy Lord is the Most Generous,
who taught by the Pen,
taught Man that (which) he knew not.*

Qur'an 96: 1-5. A.J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*,
New York, Macmillan, 1955.

The greatest miracle was the revelation of the Qur'an which was transmitted by the Prophet in messages of unequal length at different times over a period of twenty-three years... The explicit and implicit testimony of the Qur'an is that the author is God Himself. It is never the Prophet who speaks in the Qur'an. The Scripture either refers to him in the third person or addresses him directly — O Prophet, O Messenger, We reveal to thee, We send thee, do this, recite this: such is the language of the Qur'an... The direct proof of the divine origin of the Qur'an is manifest all through the Scripture itself... It is for this reason that the Qur'an holds the highest place in Islam.

For Muslims, the Qur'an is not only the text of prayers, the instrument of prophecy, the food for the spirit, the favourite canticle of the soul. It is at the same time the fundamental law, the treasure of the sciences, the mirror of the ages. It is the consolation for the present and the hope for the future. In what it affirms the Qur'an is the criterion of truth. In what it orders or prohibits, it is the best model for behaviour. In what it judges, its judgment is always correct. In what it discusses it gives the decisive argument. In what it says, it is the purest and most beautiful possible expression in speech. It calms and incites most effectively. Since the Qur'an is the direct expression of the divine will, it holds supreme authority for all men.

Muhammad Abd Allah Draz, in K.W. Morgan, ed.,
Islam: the Straight Path,
New York, Ronald Press, 1958, pp.21-36.

2. Comment

There are many great holy books that may be called "scriptures": the Bible for Jews and Christians, the Qur'an for the Muslims, the Vedas for the Hindus, the Adi Granth for the Sikhs, the Pali Canon for the Theravada Buddhists and the various texts such as the Lotus Sutra of the Mahayana tradition, the Gathas of the Zoroastrian tradition, and others as well. These play a central role in the spiritual formation and life of the people who live their lives in terms of them. In some cultures that do not have written scriptures, as in the case of most African cultures, and those of the native peoples of America and the Pacific, religious traditions are preserved and transmitted through oral traditions, symbols, rituals and festivals.

In our history we have often looked at the scriptures of other traditions unsympathetically. Some Christians, not fully aware of the definitive role these scriptures play in the life of others and their intense belief about their revealed character, have described them as "human attempts", "natural revelation", etc., deeply offending peoples of other traditions. But today there is an increased awareness and interest in the scriptures of other religions. Some Christians read the scriptures of other traditions and affirm that they help them in their spiritual growth. Others are opposed to or hesitant about the use of other scriptures in private or public worship.

3. Discussion and questions

Discuss among yourselves some of the ways in which you understand and interpret the Bible as Christian scripture.

With the help and guidance of people of another faith in your community, select a few important passages from their scriptures and study them. Where possible, do this together with friends of other faiths, so that you may understand them in the light of authentic faith experience.

- Have you previously had an exposure to the religious traditions of others through their scriptures? If so, what was your response? If not, what were the reasons for hesitating to become familiar with the scriptures of your neighbours?
- In view of the fact that our neighbours also believe their scriptures to be revealed, what do we mean when we say that the Bible is the word of God? How do we understand and respond to similar affirmations by others?
- Through the scriptures of another tradition, do we come to a better understanding of our neighbours of another faith? To a wider understanding of God? Is there a place for the use of other scriptures in personal spiritual growth? In private prayer? In public worship? What do you think are the issues involved?



a)



b)



c)

Jesus Christ — Deepening Our Understanding of Christ in a Religiously Plural World

STUDY IV

A. CHRISTIAN "IMAGES" OF CHRIST

1. Four artistic interpretations of Christ from different cultures, and a text.

- a) Pantocrator from Byzantine apse, Daphni, 11th century.
- b) Crucifix, Peru, contemporary.
- c) Portrayal of the Emmaus story, China, contemporary.
- d) Drawing of Christ healing a leper, Holland, 17th century.



d)

- e) Also consider the following biblical text and a contemporary commentary on it:

Christ Jesus, ... though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, ... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Phil. 2:5-11

A commentary on the text

If we read the very early Christian hymn from Philippians (quoted and perhaps edited by Paul) in the Jewish context that was his and that of the early church, we might say that it interprets Jesus in the figures of scripture: Christ Jesus, though like Adam in the "image and likeness" of God, did not grasp after equality with God (in contrast with men of the tower of Babel), but became, like Israel, the humble slave of God (cf. the servant poems of Isaiah 42 ff.), obedient to God even unto death. Therefore God exalted him and crowned him with God's name, that all should fall down before him in whom they are confronted by God, confessing him as Lord so as to give all honour and glory to God the Father, as Jesus did himself.

Paul van Buren, Theological Significance Study Workshop II, Bossey, 1986.

2. Comment

These representations in art as well as the commentary on the Philippians passage are interpretations of Jesus. They are also, indirectly, interpretations of how we understand God. The pictures are as diverse as the various interpretations of Jesus that we find in the New Testament, such as Christ, the son of God, the son of man, New Adam, the word, the Saviour, Redeemer, etc. The Christian tradition has, from the beginning, borne witness to the mystery of Jesus Christ. The interpretation of Christ, however, has been largely determined by the time and place, the cultural context and historical situation of those who experience the presence of God in their encounter with Christ.

3. Discussion and questions

Begin by making your own personal responses, as group members, to the images of Christ presented here in art and word. Are there other images that are important to or distinctive to your own culture? Bring along other art forms and images for comment and study. List on a blackboard the images and descriptions of Christ that come to mind when you think of Christ in the Bible, such as the rabbi or teacher, the healer, the suffering and crucified one, the cosmic and eternal Christ through whom all things were created, the Logos, the Good Shepherd, the Rebel, the Liberator, etc. You might discuss your use of the terms "Jesus" and "Christ".

- What understandings of God do these pictures convey? Have these artists seen different "Christs"? Different aspects of the same "Christ"?
- What does it mean for our Christian faith that there are many "Christologies", or understandings of who Christ was and is, both in the Gospels and in the Tradition?
- Which interpretation of Christ comes closest to your own? How do you give expression to your understanding of Christ today? What does it mean to speak of Christ within a Trinitarian understanding of God?
- How do these various understandings of Christ help us to think about people of other faiths? From your understanding or experience of Christ, what do you think should be the attitude of Christians towards people of other faiths?

B. OTHER UNDERSTANDINGS OF CHRIST

1. Texts

In dialogue with people of other faiths, we may discover perspectives and insights which could help us in developing our own interpretations of Christ and of God. They may see in Jesus something we have missed, or from the perspective of their own faith they may raise questions that will throw light on the role of Christ in our faith. Consider the following:

- The contemporary Zen Buddhist Masao Abe talks about the image of Christ conveyed by St Paul in the passage from Philippians quoted above. He notes that the Christian tradition tends to use "both/and" language to speak of the paradoxical immanence and transcendence of Ultimate Reality, while the Buddhist tradition tends to use "neither/nor" language. He wonders if they do not both convey a similar insight into the nature of Ultimate Reality.

Since the ultimate truth of religion for Zen is entirely beyond duality, Zen prefers to express it in a negative way. When Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty asked Bodhidharma, "What is the ultimate principle of the holy truth?" the First Patriarch replied: "Emptiness, no holiness." In his "Song of Enlightenment" Yung Chia (Jap.: Yoka, 665-713) said:

In clear seeing, there is not one single thing

There is neither man nor Buddha.

...As clearly shown in this passage (Phil. 2:5-8), Jesus Christ is God who became flesh by emptying himself, even unto death. It is really through this kenotic negation that flesh and spirit, the secular and the sacred, the immanent and the transcendent became identical in Jesus Christ. Indeed, Jesus Christ may be said to be the Christian symbol of Ultimate Reality. So far, this Christian idea of the kenotic Christ is close to the idea of "neither man nor Buddha". At least it may be said that Christianity and Zen represent Ultimate Reality in similar terms, where the immanent and the transcendent, the secular and the sacred, are paradoxically one.

Masao Abe, "God, Emptiness, and the True Self",
in F. French, ed. *The Buddha Eye: an Anthology of the Kyoto School*,
New York, Crossroad, 1982.

- b) The Muslim writer and thinker Sayyed Hossein Nasr uses his understanding of the centrality of the Christ event for Christians to convey to us how Muslims view the Qur'an and how they understand the role of the illiterate prophet Muhammad in the divine revelatory event:

One could of course make a comparison between Islam and Christianity by comparing the Prophet to Christ, the Qur'an to the New Testament, etc.... In this way the sacred book of one religion would correspond to the sacred book in the other religion, the central figure in one religion to the central figure in the other religion and so on... But in order to understand what the Qur'an means to Muslims and why the Prophet is believed to be unlettered according to Islamic belief, it is more significant to consider this comparison from another point of view.

The Word of God in Islam is the Qur'an; in Christianity it is Christ. The vehicle of the Divine Message in Christianity is the Virgin Mary; in Islam it is the soul of the Prophet. The Prophet must be unlettered for the same reason that the Virgin Mary must be virgin. The human vehicle of a Divine Message must be pure and untainted. The Divine Word can only be written on the pure and "untouched" tablet of human receptivity. If this Word is in the form of flesh the purity is symbolized by the virginity of the mother who gives birth to the Word, and if it is in the form of a book this purity is symbolized by the unlettered nature of the person who is chosen to announce this Word among men... Both symbolize a profound aspect of this mystery of revelation.

S.H. Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam*, New York, F.A. Praeger, 1967, pp.43-44.

- c) Anantanand Rambachan, a Hindu, had the following to say recently about Jesus:

From the perspective and background of my own Hindu tradition, I did not find it difficult to identify with the figure of Jesus. In fact, I found him positively attractive. Deeply attracted as I was, at that time, by the ideal of the Hindu sannyasin (monk), I was able to immediately see in Jesus many of the qualities of this ideal. Here also was a wandering spiritual teacher without home or possessions, fired by the true spirit of renunciation (vairagya). Here also was one who spoke with authority about the limitations and futility of the life which was spent solely in the selfish accumulation of wealth (artha) and transitory sense enjoyment (kama)....

What, therefore, initially attracted me in the personality of Jesus is the embodiment in him of what I considered to be, from my Hindu viewpoint, the ideals and values of the authentic spiritual life. This dimension of Jesus has always continued to have a meaning and appeal for me. From my own very limited perspective of Christianity, I think that this primary aspect of the personality of Christ is not always sufficiently emphasized in presenting him. I imagine that it will always be difficult to represent one who cared so little for the comforts and possessions which are usually the focus of our energies and aspirations and whose life was so totally a reflection of its centre in a higher reality. As human beings, we have mastered the art of subtly and nakedly using

our respective spiritual traditions and ideals to mask and serve our own insatiable ego-centred ambitions. It seems hopeless when that which is meant to free us from the constraints of the ego becomes the servant of its narrow interests. But perhaps in its concern to stress the uniqueness and originality of Jesus, Christianity has ignored some of the identities in the definition of the spiritual life which Jesus shares with the tradition of Hinduism.

A Hindu Response to Jesus

2. Discussion and questions

- How do these interpretations enrich or clarify our own understanding of Christ?
 - Do you think that Christ has to be reinterpreted in every cultural situation? If so, what are the elements that would go into this reinterpretation in your own cultural and religious situation?
- ☞ Many religious traditions give expression to the paradoxical mystery of God (or Ultimate Reality) who is beyond human imagination and yet accessible to humankind, who is utterly transcendent and yet intimately present among us, who is beyond the highest heavens and yet within the human heart. How is the mystery of God expressed by neighbours of other faiths in your area? In what ways do they speak of transcendence? In what ways do they speak of the divine, present or incarnate or active among us?



STUDY V

The Experience of Salvation

A. BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF SALVATION

1. Texts

What do we mean when we use the term "salvation"? What do our neighbours of other faiths mean when they speak of salvation, or liberation? Do they use such terms at all? This question of salvation is perhaps one of the most difficult areas for inter-religious understanding and dialogue. The difficulty arises in part from the fact that definitive spiritual experience, which some may call "salvation" or "liberation", often is intensely personal and may not lend itself to verbal communication. In addition, such experience is so decisive that those whose lives have been transformed make exclusive claims to their way of or experience of salvation. We find that there are different ways of understanding salvation in the Bible itself. Consider the following passages:

- a) *And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honour your father and mother'." And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth." And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell what you have, and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." At that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions. And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."*

Mark 10:17-27

- b) *The jailer called for a light, rushed in, and fell trembling at the feet of Paul and Silas. Then he led them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your family." Then they preached the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.*

Acts 16:29-32

- c) *He (Jesus) stood up to read the scriptures and was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written:
The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has chosen me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty
to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind;
to set free the oppressed
and to announce that the time has come
when the Lord will save his people.*

Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And all the people in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him, as he said to them, "This passage of scripture has come true today, as you heard it being read."

Luke 4:16-21

- d) *I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God... for the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only creation, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we await for adoption as children, the redemption of our bodies. For we have been saved in hope... For I am sure that neither death, nor life... will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Rom. 8:18-24, 38-39

2. Comment

The Bible speaks of salvation in many ways. Consider, in its own context, each of the texts given above. What does each say about the nature of salvation, the way of salvation?

In the conversation between Jesus and the rich young ruler there are references to "eternal life", "salvation", and "belonging to the kingdom of God". Do these refer to the same reality? What does each of these terms suggest?

As for the way of salvation, Jesus invites people to "follow him". Both obedience and renunciation seem to be required. And yet Jesus insists that salvation is something that God alone offers, even when it may seem impossible to us.

In the story of Paul and Silas with the jailer, however, we see a different emphasis. There is an invitation to "believe in the Lord Jesus" as a way of salvation.

In Jesus' sermon at Nazareth, the concept of salvation was given yet another dimension. Here salvation is spoken of in terms of "liberty to the captives", "the recovery of sight to the blind", and "setting the oppressed free". This broader dimension of the Christian understanding of salvation has certainly influenced many of the social and political movements in history.

In the last passage, St Paul speaks of salvation in cosmic terms. He related the longing of the individual to become a child of God with the groaning of the whole creation to be set free from its bondage. Here the individual's salvation is linked to the redemption of the whole created order.

In actual experience, Christians speak of salvation through Christ in many ways. To some it is the personal assurance that "my sins are forgiven". Others see salvation as evidenced in a transformed quality of life and values. Many Christians understand salvation in terms of a "heaven" beyond this life. Others insist that whatever may lie beyond this life, salvation certainly has to do with the establishment of God's kingdom of justice, righteousness and peace here on earth. Christians have also differed in expressing their understanding of the way to salvation. In answer to the question "What must I do to be saved?" we are told "observe the commandments", "follow me", "give away all you have to the poor", "believe in the Lord Jesus", "set free the oppressed".

3. Discussion and questions

Return to some of the questions raised in the first paragraph of this study, and discuss them in the light of the above readings on salvation. As you discuss the understandings of salvation presented here, add other images or notions of what salvation means from your own experience.

- How do you understand the term "salvation"? Which of the understandings above is most meaningful to you?
- What understanding of salvation will help us as we attempt to appreciate the spiritual experience of people of other faiths?

B. OTHER TESTIMONIES OF SALVATION

1. Texts

Having discussed some Christian understandings of salvation, let us listen to a few testimonies of persons of other faiths. The first is an account by a Hindu of how God's love and grace overwhelmed him. This is taken from the much-loved poetry of the *Tiruvachakam*, which plays a central role in the prayers and devotions of the South Indian Shaiva Siddhanta tradition.

- a) *I was an insignificant being, worth nothing, attaching myself from birth to birth to the grass, worm, tree, to bird, beast, demon, man, asura, sage, and deva. Embedded fearfully in ignorance and falsehood, ensnared by deluding values*

that intensified my suffering and travail, I played on the sands of time, a puppet under the sway of the deceptive senses. Life's "partings and meetings", its change and decay within and without confused me, till I grew weary and oppressed. It was then He endowed me with unquenchable yearning for "release" from the myriad perils of human existence, and enlightened me in the stupor of darkness. My God-Guru, peerless Gem of lustrous light, impregnated me with divine Love and cut asunder all earthly ties and made me "His own, His very own!" and led me to the Rock of Grace, from whence, I contacted directly the Sun of my Soul!

From Ratna Navaratnam, *Tiruvachakam, the Hindu Testament of Love*, Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1963, pp.63-64.

- b) In the following passage, a contemporary Buddhist writer gives a different perception on "salvation", or the spiritual goal of life, and how it may be achieved.

Soon after his enlightenment, the Buddha exclaimed: "Like a man lost in dense forest suddenly coming upon a track, a path, an ancient, forgotten path that led him to a city long lost to view, so have I, O monks, discovered a Way, a path. It is the Way revealed by the Buddhas, long lost to man in the wilderness of his thoughts..."

With the discovery comes light; with light comes clarity; and with clarity knowledge beyond doubt, uncertainty and fear. "Unshakeable is my mind," declared the Buddha to Subhuti, for he has penetrated beyond speculation and conjecture. "The Tathagatha has no theories, O Vaccha! He has penetrated the nature of perception. He sees forms, the arising of forms and cessation of forms..."

The Buddha had no use for belief in his preaching during his ministry — which lasted for about 45 years. He never called upon a hearer to believe. In this dispensation one does not have to accept a set of beliefs to begin with... The goal of Buddhist meditation is insight; that is, to penetrate through the appearance and at the reality of every phenomenon that comes within the field of attention. There is nothing secondhand in this process; no passed-over truth; no handed-down belief. One has to work for oneself — it is your own adventure...

In Buddhism sanctity is not hidden in a book, in a person, in a temple, or in a mantram or phrase. But one comes to that which has true sanctitude by cleansing the mind of impurities, by refining it through right views and then making it subtle by right meditation. The mind made pure, refined and subtle leads to saintliness, bliss and blessedness.

Ven. M. Sumedha Thera, "An Analytical Aspect of the Buddha Dharma", in *The Young Buddhist*, 1977, pp. 30-32.

- c) The notion that God seeks out and embraces those who follow Him is made clear in the famous and oft-quoted Muslim Hadith, which is ascribed to God: "If my servant draws nearer to Me by a handsbreadth, I draw nearer to him by an armslength, and if he draws nearer to Me by an armslength, I draw nearer to him by twice that distance. And if he comes walking to meet Me, I come

running to meet him" (al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, Book 97, Section 50, Hadith 1). The experience of having been met, touched, and transformed by God is told by many of the Sufis, such as the tenth century al-Junayd:

Now I have known, O Lord, what lies within my heart;
In secret, from the world apart
my tongue hath talked with my Adored.

So in a manner we
united are, and One;
Yet otherwise disunion
is our state eternally.

Though from my gaze profound
deep awe hath hid Thy face,
In wondrous and ecstatic Grace
I feel Thee touch my inmost ground.

A.J. Arberry, *Sufism: an Account of the Mystics of Islam*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1950, p. 59.

- d) In the Passover seder, Jews affirm that the Holy One, blessed be He, not only redeemed the children of Israel long ago, but redeems us in every generation:

Therefore, we are bound to thank, praise, laud, glorify, exalt, honour, bless, extol, and adore Him who performed all these miracles for our fathers and for us. He has brought us forth from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from mourning to holiday, from darkness to great light, and from bondage to redemption. Let us then recite before him a new song: Hallelujah!

The Passover Haggadah, N.H. Glatzer, ed., New York, Schocken Books, 1953, p. 51.

2. Comment

Testimony to the experience of God's grace, love, and saving power is not unique to Christians. The texts presented here show different aspects of the issues faced when we think theologically about salvation in the context of other faiths.

The Muslim texts attest not only the human experience of being touched by God's grace, but the divine intention to seek out the soul that inclines in the slightest towards God. The Passover Haggadah attests to the experience of every generation of Jews of having been brought "from slavery to freedom", "from bondage to redemption".

3. Discussion and questions

Discuss these texts together, adding to them the experiences and insights that those in your group are able to bring to the understanding of them.

- a) What questions and insights do we gain as we listen to the testimonies of salvation, liberation, or redemption from people of other faiths?

- b) In your experience, how do friends of other faiths speak about such decisive spiritual experiences as salvation or liberation in their tradition?
- c) How can we deal theologically with the experience of salvation, liberation, redemption, etc. to which persons of other faiths bear testimony? Christians maintain various attitudes towards the salvation of people of other faiths, i.e.:
- * Some maintain the position that only the confessing community of Christ is saved. It used to be said that "outside the church there is no salvation". As one such theologian put it, "If they die without knowledge of Jesus Christ, they perish."
 - * Others have taken the position that because of God's providence and goodness, God's saving designs must extend to all people. People of other faiths may indeed be saved, but in this view they are saved by Christ, whose grace is the constitutive cause of salvation. Christ is the Way that includes all other ways.
 - * Still other Christians are critical of such an inclusivist insistence that our neighbours are saved by Christ, whether they know it or not. This, they feel, is spiritually patronizing and does violence to our neighbours' self-understanding. They may also disagree with the exclusivist claim. As one group of the United Church of Canada put it: "If there is no salvation outside the church, we reject such a salvation for ourselves. We come to this notion of the salvation of others through being loved by Christ. We would be diminished without the others as others."
- What do you think about the various attitudes sketched above? Do people in your group recognize one or another of these attitudes as their own? Can you state these attitudes more fully in your own situation? Are there other attitudes that people in your group hold?
- d) Other faith traditions also make claims to the uniqueness of their spiritual path, their relation to God, or their experience of redemption. How do we respond to these many claims to uniqueness? Can each be unique in its own way? How can religious people live together with these claims?

NOTES



STUDY VI

Witness in a Religiously Plural World

A. OUR WITNESS AND OTHER WITNESSES

1. Texts

Christians are called to bear witness to the good news, a witness expressed through the word of proclamation, in the liturgy of the church, and in the life of service. But what of the witness of people of other faiths? Even though Christians are surrounded by people who have their own witness to offer, there is sometimes very little awareness of the intensity with which others wish to offer their witness and the universality of the message they bring. Listen to the following witnesses:

- a) Swami Vivekananda, who brought energy and insight to the Hindu renaissance of the late nineteenth century, had this to say after his journey in the 1890s to the USA and Europe:

Spirituality must conquer the West. Slowly they are finding out that what they want is spirituality to preserve them as nations. They are waiting for it. They are eager for it. Where is the supply to come from? Where are the men ready to go out to every country in the world with the message of the great sages of India? Where are the men who are ready to sacrifice everything so that this message shall reach every corner of this world? Such heroic souls are wanted to help the spread of truth. Such heroic workers are wanted to go abroad and help; to disseminate the great truths of the Vedanta. The world wants it; without it the world will be destroyed.

The Complete Works of Vivekananda, Almora, Advaita Ashrama, 1924-32, III, p.276.

- b) *From the start of his mission to the end, the Prophet never lost track of the universal nature of his mission, whether he was preaching to relations, Arabs, or addressing the whole of mankind. This mission is Islam. Islam is total submission to the one true God, the Creator, the Sustainer and the Supreme*

Sovereign of all the world. Muslims are therefore charged with the noble mission of bringing the whole world to its Supreme Sovereign, and of freeing it from servitude to any false god. The propagation of Islam to all people is a religious duty which must be undertaken by all true Muslims by following the good example of the Prophet who was sanctioned as "Mercy for all mankind".

Badru D. Kateregga and David W. Shenk,
Islam and Christianity: a Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue,
Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1981, p.76.

- c) Ven. Ananda Mangala Thera speaks of Buddhism as an "evangelistic religion" which sees the need for tolerance and understanding in the very act of witnessing:

In multi-religious societies evangelism is to be understood as a calm and a peaceful exercise in the propagation of religious beliefs. It also requires a respectful understanding of co-existence with other religious beliefs, whether primitive or more developed. Evangelization needs a disciplined code of "truthfulness" in furthering human resources to gain "freedom and happiness", not only here and now, but also in the "here-after"...

Buddhism is undoubtedly the first evangelistic religion, followed by Christianity and Islam. When Gautama Buddha admonished his disciples in the following words, Buddha Dhamma became an evangelistic religion: "Go ye forth, O Bhikkhus, on your journey, for the profit of the many, for the bliss of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, the profit, the bliss of devas and mankind, go not, any two together. Proclaim, O Bhikkhus, the Dhamma glorious in the beginning, glorious in its middle and glorious in its ending,"...

Emperor Ashoka established a golden rule of ethics (regarding evangelism) when he admonished in the following manner:

One should not honour only one's own religion and condemn the religion of others; but one should also honour others' religions for this or that reason. In so doing, one helps one's own religion to grow and renders service to the religions of others too. In acting otherwise, one digs the grave of one's own religion and also does harm to other religions. Whosoever honours his own religion, and condemns other religions, does so indeed through devotion to his own religion, thinking: "I will glorify my own religion". But on the contrary, in so doing he injures his own religion more gravely, as concord is good. Let all listen, and be willing to listen to the doctrines professed by others.

2. Comment

In these passages we find that people of various religious traditions also understand themselves as commissioned to bear witness to their faith. In Islam the propagation of the faith is seen as a religious duty, for the message of Islam is understood to be universal. In the Buddhist text we see a similar emphasis; the path of Buddhism is seen as a way that would bring liberation to all people. There is,

however, a call to Buddhist missions to be based on profound love and concern for humanity and respect for other faiths. In Swami Vivekananda's speech there is a sense of urgency. He sees the world — especially the industrialized world — to be in danger of religious bankruptcy and spiritual peril. He calls upon the Hindus to volunteer to bring the message of the sages of India to the world, without which "the world will be destroyed". He sensed that the spirituality of the East was urgently needed to balance the growing materialism and soullessness of the West.

As Christians we have often thought of ourselves as the bearers of the message and others as mere recipients. We have looked at witness mostly as a one-way process. How then can we respond to these passages from people of other faiths which point to a similar sense of urgency, commitment and a sense of obligation to bear witness to the world?

This has become an important question because there is an amazing resurgence of religion in our world today. Some see this phenomenon as the rejection of the secular, technological culture and a search for a spiritual basis for life. In responding to this quest all religions have become manifestly "missionary" in character. They all seek to provide an understanding of the human predicament and project a way to overcome it which would be meaningful to the contemporary person. We are, of course, aware that not everything about the religious revival of our time has been a blessing. But can we any longer ignore the fact that we live in a world where there are many witnesses? How can we cope with the plurality of witness which is a reality of our age?

3. Discussion and questions

Discuss the message contained in the testimony of these witnesses. Are there others you have heard, known, or read about who present a powerful witness to their faith, in word or deed?

- What is your understanding of such witness on the part of people of other faiths? How do *they* understand it? This is a question you might wish to discuss in dialogue with neighbours of other faiths. If you do so, you may also discuss methods of bearing witness, and the legitimacy of bearing such witness in today's world.
- What do you think Paul meant when he said: "In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways; yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness"? (Acts 14:16-17)
- Despite the fact of their differing beliefs and traditions, Christians and people of other faiths often work and struggle together for justice and social change. We as Christians understand our engagement in the struggle for justice to be part of our Christian witness. How do we understand the witness of those who join with us? What implications does this have for interfaith dialogue?

B. DIFFERENT BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Texts

The biblical writers present us with a variety of understandings of witnessing to the Christian faith. Through the centrality given to particular texts our view of witness has been shaped in particular ways. In the light of what you have learned about witness in other faiths look at the following biblical passages:

Acts 1:8 — *Being witnesses.*

I Cor. 11:26 — *Celebration of the eucharist as the act of witness.*

Matt. 28:19 — *Making disciples of nations.*

Matt. 25:31-46 — *Witness as service.* (There are scholars who disagree with the service-centred interpretation of this passage.)

Here are some thoughts on Christian witness in the world :

- a) *Our obedience in mission should be patterned on the ministry and teaching of Jesus... Churches are free to choose the way they consider best to announce the Gospel to different people in different circumstances. But these options are never neutral. Every methodology illustrates or betrays the Gospel we announce. In all communication of the Gospel, power must be subordinate to love.*

From *Mission and Evangelism:*
an Ecumenical Affirmation, Geneva, WCC, 1983, Paragraph 28.

- b) *It is Christian faith in the Triune God... which calls us Christians to human relationship with our many neighbours. Such relationship includes dialogue: witnessing to our deepest convictions and listening to those of our neighbours. It is the Christian faith which sets us free to be open to the faiths of others, to risk, to trust and to be vulnerable. In dialogue, conviction and openness are held in balance.*

From *Guidelines on Dialogue*, Geneva, WCC, 1979, p.16.

- c) *The content of the Church's witness is the continuation of Jesus' ministry: kerygma (proclamation), diakonia (service) and koinonia (fellowship). The witness is not just the numerical and geographical expansion of the Christian faith nor is it a form of ecclesiastical propaganda in a spirit of triumphalism. It is the identification of the Church with the oppressed, the struggle for liberation and service among the poor. Witness is first of all internal, that is, the self-penetration of the Church into the profound roots and dimensions of its nature and existence, and then external, in other words, the self-realization of the Church in time and space. These two aspects of witness are intimately and dynamically inter-related. Therefore, witness is not one of the functions of the Church: the Church does not have a witness, it is the witness.*

From *Martyria — Mission: the Witness of the Orthodox Churches Today*, ed. Ion Bria, WCC, 1980, p. 213.

... Hence the worshipping community itself is an act of witness. On the other hand, the nourishment received in the Eucharist enables each community member to become witness to Christ's life in the world. Eucharist is the source of Church life and mission, the inner stimulus which motivated the community for mission. Thus the Liturgy must not be a closed event limited to the celebration in the church and to the nominal members of the Church; it has to be continued in the lives of the faithful in all dimensions of life. One cannot separate Liturgy and life, therefore there is a "liturgy" after Liturgy... Mission was not primarily seen as an opportunity to extend geographically the frontiers of the churches, but rather as a way of continuing Christ's life in the life of humanity.

Ibid., pp.8,10.

3. Discussion and questions

Discuss your understanding of witness, drawing on the above statements and on your own experience. Describe the nature of your own witness in your situation. How is the witness of the church or of individual Christians received? What have been the obstacles? In discussing your own situation, consider the following questions:

- a) How do the terms "mission", "evangelism", "witness", and "dialogue" describe the relation or attitude of the church to people of other faiths? What distinctions would you like to make between or among these terms and the attitudes they suggest?
- b) In the light of your study and experience with people of other faiths, what can we learn about the way and the spirit in which we bear witness to the gospel today?
- c) "In dialogue, conviction and openness are held in balance." How can this be done, individually and corporately?



STUDY VII

Spirituality

A. DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO SPIRITUALITY

1. Texts

The concept of spirituality varies between religions. Also, the word "spirituality" is understood in many ways within various religious traditions. First let us consider the following texts which, in one way or another, deal with the area of spirituality.

- a) Swami Krishnananda says the following in relation to one form of Hindu spirituality:

The spirit of sadhana (spiritual discipline) in the inner part is more important than the outward form with which most people usually busy themselves... It is to be remembered that sadhana is not any kind of bodily action that is outwardly demonstrated in the world, but a state of mind, a condition of thinking, a consciousness in which one lives. Suppose one counts ten thousand beads on a particular day, with a heart filled with rancour,... the beads are not going to do one any good. All actions are symbols of an inward mood of mind. And when the mood is absent, the action itself has no significance... It is difficult to make one understand that the spirit of sadhana is determined by the extent to which one aspires for God-realization...

Spiritual Life, The Divine Life Society, U.P., India, pp.11-16.

- b) Here is a prayer of a modern Hindu sage, Ramana Maharshi:

*Within the heart's cave Brahman ever shines.
There, all alone is "I" the self-aware.
Then enter deep in the heart by search for Self
Or diving deep by meditation's means
Or stilling mind by use of breath-control.
Thus may'st thou find sure rest within the Self.*

A.N. Sharma, *Modern Saints and Mystics*,
The Divine Life Society, U.P., India, 1978, p.133.

- c) Orthodox tradition within Christianity speaks of spirituality in terms of *theosis* or deification. The following passage explains the final goal of spiritual life:

The aim of the Christian life which Orthodox spirituality describes as the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God can equally be defined in terms of deification (theosis). The Church Fathers, as for example St Basil the Great, described man as a native creature whose final goal is the attainment of theosis, "deification" or "divinization". For Orthodoxy humankind's salvation and redemption means its deification.

Behind the doctrine of deification there lies the belief that man is made in the image and likeness of God, the Holy Trinity. "May they all be one", Christ prayed at the Last Supper: "as thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, so also may they be in us" (John 17:21). Just as the three persons of the Holy Trinity "dwell" in one another in an unceasing koinonia of love, so man, made in the image of the Trinity, is called to "dwell" in the Trinitarian God.

The mystical union between God and man is a true union, yet in this union Creator and creature do not become fused into one single being. Unlike some Eastern religions which understand God-soul union as total identification, Orthodox mystical theology has always insisted that man, however closely linked to God, retains his full personal integrity. Man, when deified, remains distinct (though not separate) from God. The Mystery of the Trinity is a mystery of unity in diversity and those who express the Trinity in themselves do not sacrifice their personal characteristics. Therefore, man does not become God by nature, but is merely a "created God", a god by grace or by status.

Gennadios Limouris, Theological Significance Study, Workshop II, Bossey 1986.

- d) There is also a tradition within the church which speaks of spirituality primarily in terms of Christian discipleship in the commitment to justice. It has been said: "The question of bread for myself is a material question. The question of bread for my neighbour is a spiritual question." An ecumenical group gathered at Annecy in France in December 1984, to explore the marks of "A Spirituality for Our Times". Discipleship in service, the group recognized, is one of those "marks".

It is a spirituality that is expressed in service and witness. We are to be a servant church, willing to divest ourselves of the allurements of power, fully involved in the daily struggles of the people, recognizing the wholeness of God's kingdom. We are to be a witnessing church, committed to the non-violent struggle for peace and reconciliation with creation and with one another. The God of history and Jesus of Nazareth direct us to throw in our lot with the poor and oppressed. To learn the gospel from them and to live in solidarity with them. To confront the sinful structures that oppress them. This will require repentance, conversion, and suffering. And we rejoice when the body is built up in integrity and freedom. Our faithfulness is judged by the inclusiveness of our communities and by the compassion we show to the least among us, the hungry, the naked, the sick and imprisoned.

A Spirituality for Our Times, Geneva, WCC, 1985, pp.18-19.

2. Discussion and questions

How do you respond to these statements on the meaning of spirituality? Is its purpose to wean ourselves from the tastes of this world and develop a taste for God alone, that our passions and ambitions may be transformed Godward? Is it to dwell in God through the power of the Holy Spirit? Is it to be actively at work in the service of the poor and oppressed, in the work of reconciliation and non-violence? What other understandings of spirituality do you have?

- a) Whom do you consider to be a "spiritual", "holy", or "saintly" person? What are the qualities of such a person? Have you encountered such "holiness" in persons of other faiths?
- b) If or when you come across saintliness or holiness in someone of another faith, how do you understand this theologically?

B. THE SPIRITUALITY OF PRAYER

1. Texts

Spirituality, of course, inevitably involves some form of spiritual discipline such as prayer or meditation from which one draws strength and insight. As Christians, we are a people who pray. We pray in a great variety of ways. We open our hearts to God, we speak and are spoken to, in prayer. We live amidst people of other faiths who also pray. How do we understand the prayers of our neighbours?

- a) At dawn, an elderly Hindu woman stands in her dripping sari in the waters of the River Ganges, her rites of bathing completed, her hands folded in prayer:

At dawn I worship Shiva, the Lord who is half-man, half-woman, the Primeval Lord who is the cause of the creation, maintenance, and dissolution of this world, the Lord of the Universe, the conqueror of the world who captivates also my heart, who is the one infallible remedy for the afflictions of earthly life.

Adapted from "A Morning Hymn to Shiva",
Altar Flowers, Calcutta, Advaita Ashram, 1953.

- b) At noontime in Indonesia, a Muslim man excuses himself from the company of his Christian friend to join Muslims throughout the world who bow down in prayer. "I must remember our Creator," he explains to his companion. He begins with Islam's most universal prayer:

*In the Name of God, the merciful Lord of mercy.
Praise be to God, the Lord of all being.
The merciful Lord of mercy, Master of the day of judgment,
You alone we serve and to you alone we come for aid.
Guide us in the straight path,
The path of those whom you have blessed,
Not of those against whom there is displeasure,
Nor of those who go astray.*

The "Fatihah", Qur'an, Surah 1, Kenneth Cragg, trans.

- c) On Friday evening a Jewish mother lights the candles on the supper table as the family begins the Sabbath service. Their prayers include this one:

God of might, light of the world, bless us with a perfect blessing in Your presence. Enlighten our eyes with Your light and Your truth, just as we light the Sabbath candles before You, and so make a spirit of trust and love dwell in our homes. Guide us with the light of Your presence, for in Your light we see light. Send Your blessing to every home of Israel and to the whole world, and set peace and eternal blessing upon them. Amen.

Forms of Prayer for Jewish Worship, edited by the Assembly of Rabbis of the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain, London, 1977, p.315.

- d) A Kikuyu from Kenya offers a traditional prayer of his people:

*O my Father, Great Elder,
I have no words to thank you,
But with your deep wisdom
I am sure that you can see
How I value your glorious gifts.
O my Father, when I look upon your greatness,
I am confounded with awe.
O Great Elder,
Ruler of all things earthly and heavenly,
I am your warrior,
Ready to act in accordance with your will.*

- e) This prayer comes from the Shona people (Zimbabwe):

*Great Spirit!
Piler up of the rocks into towering mountains!
When thou stampest on the stone,
The dust rises and fills the land,
Hardness of the precipice;
Waters of the pool that turn
Into misty rain when stirred.
Vessel overflowing with oil!
Father of Runji,
Who seweth the heavens like cloth:
Let him knit together that which is below.
Caller forth of the branching trees:
Thou bringest forth the shoots
That they stand erect.
Thou hast filled the land with mankind,
The dust rises on high, oh Lord!
Wonderful One, thou livest
In the midst of the sheltering rocks,
Thou givest of rain to mankind:
We pray to thee, Hear us, Lord!*

*Show mercy when we beseech thee, Lord.
Thou art on high with the spirits of the great.
Thou raisest the grass-covered hills
Above the earth, and createst the rivers,
Gracious One.*

From John S. Mbiti, *The Prayers of African Religion*, London, SPCK, and Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 1975, pp.148f.

2. Comment

As Christians, we recognize acts we perceive as "prayer" in the lives of people of other faiths. Some prayers are spoken; others are unspoken. We can affirm from our own experience of prayer that, in the yearning of the heart towards God, words may not come readily. According to St Paul, it is the Spirit who enables us to pray when we cannot find the words to pray, and it is the Spirit that intercedes for us "with sighs too deep for words" (Rom. 8). Contemplation or silent meditation is also a form of prayer or "centring".

Prayer too may require the discipline of practice. Devout Hindus pray three times a day, or at least at dawn and nightfall. Muslims remember God in prayer five times a day. Many Orthodox disciplines of prayer aim to inculcate the perpetual remembrance of God.

What does it mean that we as Christians are people of prayer living in the midst of other peoples of prayer? The Jewish writer Chaim Potok puts the issue powerfully in the question of a young Jewish rabbi travelling in Japan. At a Buddhist shrine, he observed an old Japanese man, prayer book in hand, slowly swaying back and forth as he stood in prayer. The young rabbi asked his Jewish companion, "Do you think our God is listening to him?"

I don't know, ... I never thought of it.

Neither did I until now. If He's not listening, why not? If he is listening, then — well, what are we all about?" (*The Book of Lights*, New York, Fawcett Crest, 1981, pp.261-2).

The rabbi's question is a profoundly important theological question: If God is not listening, why not? What kind of God do we understand God to be that he would not listen to the ardent prayers of this man? If God is listening, then what is distinctive about us as a community? Who are we who have especially claimed the ear of God?

3. Discussion and questions

If you have not yet visited a place of worship, a monastery, a meditation hall of another religious tradition, this would be a good time to do so as a group. If possible, arrange to attend a worship event and try to find out from the participants as much as possible about the songs, prayers, and rituals which make up the worship. Discuss the event, both in terms of what it meant for the participants and what it meant to members of your group who went as guests or observers.

With this as part of your collective experience as a group, reflect on the prayers above, and on other prayers and aspects of spiritual discipline that you know about from your neighbours and colleagues of other faiths.

Do you think it is meaningful to speak of a particular prayer as "Hindu", "Muslim", "Christian", etc.? If so, in what sense? If not, why not? What is "Christian" about the Lord's Prayer, which is, of course, a Jewish prayer in origin?

C. SHARING IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF OTHER RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

1. Text

Now listen to this text where witness is given by a person on how her spiritual life was enriched by incorporating techniques of meditation that belong to another religious tradition. The passage comes from *Zen and Me* by Ann E. Chester, who, remaining a convinced Christian, practised Zazen, sitting meditation, for many years:

I knew from experience that an authentic prayer life had to involve more than "saying prayers". Zen helped me to clarify my concepts and to grow in a more contemplative stance towards life. I saw this stance as twofold: inner and outer.

The practice of Zazen became a way to develop the inner stance. Spoken word really tends to limit God, limiting him to the meaning of the words spoken. But "centring down" as the Quakers put it, remaining at the "still point" within, completely open to the all-pervading energy of God, was to be in touch with myself, with who I really am; it is also to give God full freedom to help me become what I am capable of being... Zazen has helped me to seek that depth, to be at home there, to deepen it, to act out of it.

The outer contemplative stance is described in the Christian tradition as "a loving glance". It is really the eye of the poet, or of any artist, the open eye that looks with love on all reality, seeing nothing as unimportant, nothing as uninteresting....

Two aspects of Zen deepened this outward contemplative stance. One was the directive "to keep the eyes open" because the practice of Zazen was not to "shut out reality" but to "make one more aware of reality". That appealed to me as an antidote to any "ivory-tower praying", always a danger to be avoided by the contemplative. A second deepening influence was the Zen openness to nature. The practice of mindfulness, of being completely present wherever I am, increased my awareness of beauty in often overlooked places, like noticing the velvet cameos of the milkweed blossom as I walked along a dusty lane... When I practise Zazen, centring down to that "still point" within, I am not only in touch with myself and with God; I am in touch with all humankind, with all reality. I find the horizons of my prayer and of my consequent action constantly expanding. I become more aware of what it means to be a member of the human family and of the earth community. And as I become more adept in the twofold movement — advance without, retreat within — I am growing in the realization that the inner and the outer contemplative stances are not at all separate paths. It is only illusion to think they are. They have always been one. And to walk in

this path means to act out responsibility not from duty, not from zeal, not from any desire to play the hero, the saviour, the martyr; it is rather to act spontaneously out of the integralness of our nature, which is HUMANITY.

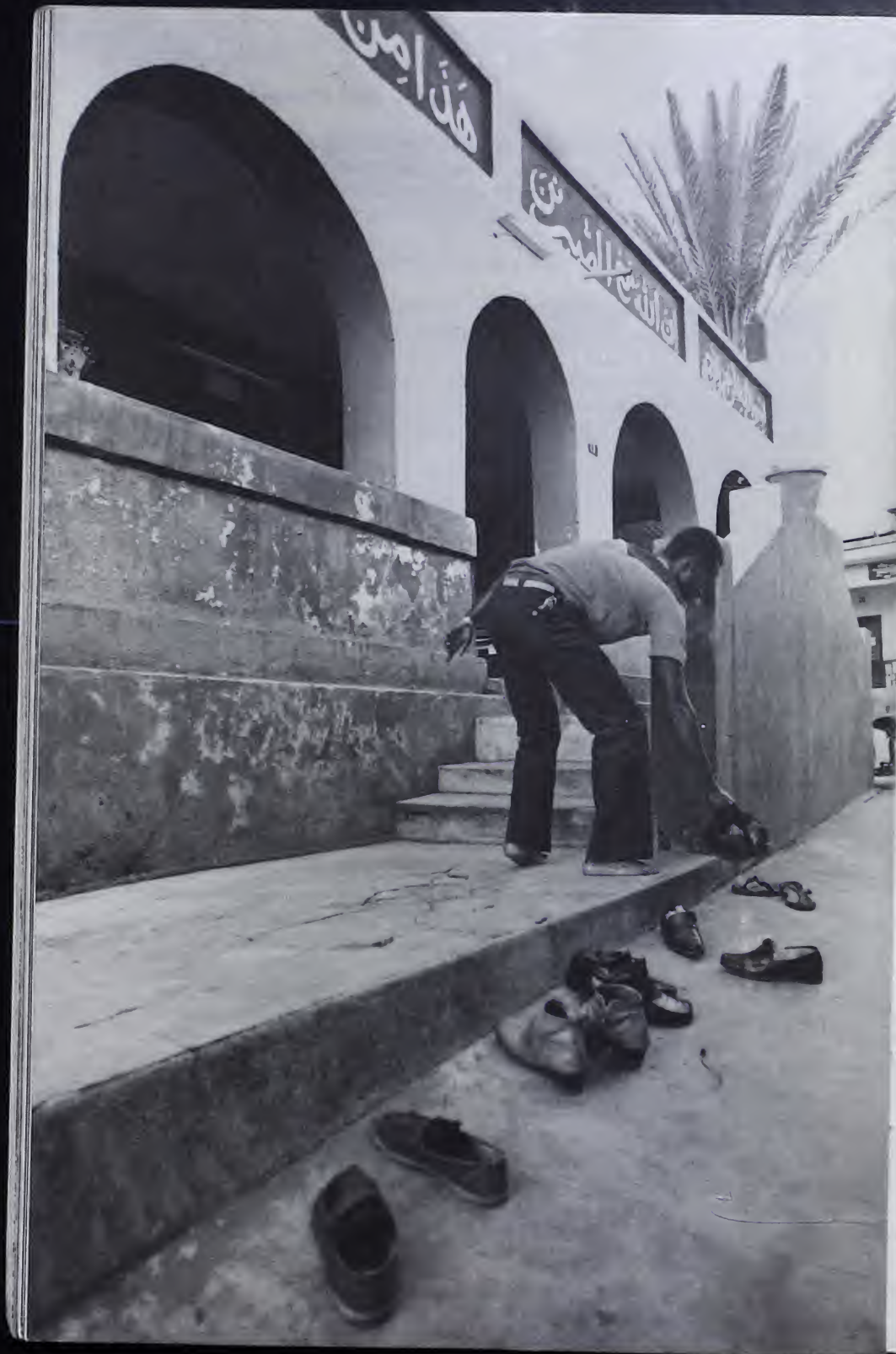
In Spring Wind, Vol. 4, No. 4, Winter 1984-85, pp.25-27.

2. Discussion and questions

Discuss the testimony of this woman. Are there other examples you can think of where Christians have explored or benefited from the spiritual resources of another tradition, remaining fundamentally grounded in Christianity? Do you know of people of other faiths who have explored or benefited from the spiritual resources of the Christian tradition, while still remaining firmly a part of their own tradition?

- What are the issues involved in the "sharing" of spiritual traditions?
- How do you understand the Holy Spirit, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the "spiritual" life? What do we mean when we speak of the "spiritual" life of people of other faiths?

For further discussion of some of the specific issues of inter-religious sharing, you might invite people from a local interfaith council, if there is one in your area, to discuss together some of the issues being faced on the question of worship and spirituality when persons of different religious traditions meet.



STUDY VIII

Community

A. THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND THE COMMUNITY OF HUMANKIND

1. Texts

Consider the following texts from the Bible :

- a) *When the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between human beings and all living beings on earth. That is the sign of the promise which I am making to all living beings.*

Gen. 9:16-17

- b) *The Lord says, "I am making a new earth and new heavens. The events of the past will be completely forgotten... Wolves and lambs will eat together; lions will eat straw, as cattle do, and snakes will no longer be dangerous. On Zion, my sacred hill, there will be nothing harmful or evil."*

Is. 65:17, 24-25

- c) *He said therefore, "What is the Kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his garden; and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches."*

Luke 13:18-19

Community is basic to Christian faith. The communion of believers is rooted in our understanding of God as Trinity. We see the community of the church as the body of Christ. There are many beautiful images of the church as a community. See, for example, Paul's image of the Body and its many parts in 1 Cor. 12:12-30 and Peter's image of a house of living stones in 1 Pet. 2.

The texts above, however, take us beyond ourselves to the larger community which is God's goal for creation. Although our community, our family so to speak, is the church, the kingdom of God is larger than the church. The hospitality of the kingdom, like that of a great tree, is widespread. The kingdom of God stretches our minds and hearts towards a larger vision of the transformed human community that God intends.

What do we mean when we, as Christians, speak of "community?" Our own particular, familiar community of the church? The wider "community of communities" that is humankind? The envisioned community of the kingdom of God? We have long had a certain tension within Christian thinking as to where the emphasis should be. This tension is suggested in the text from the 1977 WCC consultation on "Dialogue in Community", held in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

As Christians, therefore, we are conscious of a tension between the Christian community as we experience it to be in the world of human communities, and as we believe it in essence to be in the promise of God. The tension is fundamental to our Christian identity. We cannot resolve it, nor should we seek to avoid it. In the heart of this tension we discover the character of the Christian Church as a sign at once of people's need for fuller and deeper community, and of God's promise of a restored human community in Christ. Our consciousness of the tension must preclude any trace of triumphalism in the life of the Christian Church in the communities of humankind. It must also preclude any trace of condescension towards our fellow human beings. Rather it should evoke in us an attitude of real humility towards all peoples since we know that we together with all our brothers and sisters have fallen short of the community which God intends.

Guidelines on Dialogue, paragraph 14.

2. Questions and discussion

Discuss the texts that speak of a universal covenant and community. Where do they come from, and what do you think is their meaning? What images does the New Testament give us of the community of the church? Read the passage mentioned above where Paul speaks of the one body with its many members, or where Peter speaks of the house of living stones. What other New Testament adjectives or images describe the nature of the Christian community? What adjectives or images would you use to describe the Christian community today?

- What do you think is the relation of the particular community we call the church to the wider community envisioned in the kingdom of God?
- What should be the relation of our own local church or our denominational "family" to the worldwide church? What should be the relation of the Christian family to other families of faith?
- What is the theological basis for our thinking about the Christian community and its role in the wider community of humankind? How would you describe the Christian community of women and men, clergy and laity, of denominational diversities, to someone of another faith community?

B. UNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNITY IN OTHER RELIGIONS

1. Texts

The concept of community is also basic to other faiths, as is the question of how one particular community relates to the larger or worldwide human community. For

Jews, for example, being part of the community is much more than being a member of a group. It is participation in a covenant relationship with God. While God's covenant with Noah was a universal covenant with all humankind, God's covenant with Abraham is understood as unique to the Jews.

Muslims have a very strong sense of the particularity of their community, but they see Islam as the one community which transcends all barriers and is the ultimate expression of God's will for all people. Some Muslims may even speak of the *ummat al-da'wa*, the *ummah* (community) of hope, extending the Muslim vision of community not just to Muslims, but to all who willingly share in God's mission on earth.

The Buddhist *sangha* (community) is the fellowship of those monks and nuns who have committed themselves to a life of spiritual discipline, but the larger *chatur-sangha*, the "community of the four directions", includes both monks and laity and may be seen as the embodiment of the truth of the Buddha. Again, in African traditions, the sense of community extends beyond the immediate generation of people to those who have ceased to exist in the body, to spirits, and to nature.

There is today an increasing awareness of the need for a wider community, transcending traditional boundaries of race, nation, and religion. Clearly the importance of envisioning a wider community is recognized by people of other faiths as well. Listen to these testimonies:

- Jainism does not regard birth in a family as of much consequence, since it does not recognize the caste system, but judges everyone by his way of life. We all live and thrive on the services of numerous beings, known and unknown; hence it is but appropriate that all of us render service to our fellow beings to help their progress... Mutual understanding and tolerance heighten the joy of social and ethical life to pave the way for fellow-feeling and brotherhood. With that end in view, Jain thinkers propounded... the doctrine of many points-of-view to infuse the spirit of tolerance and breadth of vision, enlightened by generous outlook on other religions and their principles*

J.K. Tukol in *Religion in the Struggle for World Community*,
Proceedings of WCRP III, ed., Homer A. Jack,
New York, 1980, p.234.

- Islam teaches us that a consequence of belief in the oneness of God is an appreciation of the unity of all mankind. The Qur'an emphasizes that all men were created from one man: God blew His spirit into Adam who, according to several verses of the Qur'an, was the original man. Man is not uniform in all aspects, but Islam teaches us that the differences in language and way of life of various nations and groups of men are signs of God's greatness. Within this context it is also pointed out that mankind is basically one, and that therefore all nations and groups of men should endeavour to come to an agreement on various fundamental points, the most essential of which is the belief that God is One and that all men belong to one family.*

H.A. Mukti Ali, "Religions, Nations and the Search
for a World Community", in *Christian Muslim Dialogue*,
eds S.J. Samartha and J.B. Taylor, WCC, 1973.

- c) Here two persons belonging to two religious communities are attempting to show how their religious tradition does recognize the need to acknowledge and be part of a wider community. In the following text, a Hindu challenges us that all religious traditions are in serious need of rethinking the way they have understood the nature of the community they seek:

Time has come for world religions to make a new departure. Confronted as they are with fundamental problems of human survival and destiny, they have both the responsibility and the opportunity to cooperate with one another in the promotion of human community and well-being. There are differences between them and will continue to be, and they need to be respected and preserved...

Traditional theology, developed in religious isolation, has now become inadequate, if not obsolete; it does not permit the different religious traditions to live side by side in friendly cooperation. Religious conflict has become tragic and pointless; no single religious tradition can expect to displace all the other religions. As far as we can see, human community will continue to be religiously pluralistic. Each religion should come to terms with this fact, and attempt to do justice to the religious experience of mankind as a whole. By a deep and a thorough investigation of its respective heritage, each tradition should open up a new spiritual horizon hospitable to the faiths of other people. The future usefulness of any religious tradition depends on its ability to cooperate with other traditions.

K.L. Seshagiri Rao, "Human Community and Religious Pluralism — a Hindu Perspective", in *Dialogue in Community*, ed. C.D. Jathannna, Mangalore, India, The Karnataka Theological Research Institute, 1982, p.162.

2. Discussion and questions

How do the people of other faiths in your area think of their own community? How do they think of themselves in relation to the wider, more diverse community around them, which includes you as Christians? Invite people from that community to discuss with you the question of what is particular and what is common in our experience and understanding of community.

- Together, describe the communities in your area. Where does your life in community naturally intersect? Where is your community life carried on separately?
- Are there particular areas where you need greater understanding of one another's sense of community? In questions of marriage or intermarriage? At times of festivals or holy days?
- Discuss the relation of women and men in your respective communities. Are changes occurring in the role and image of both women and men?
- What are the major reasons for conflict within and between religious communities? Can you illustrate from your own experience? What do you think is the role of religions in the search for peace and the resolving of conflicts? Think of examples where religions have served as agents of reconciliation.

NOTES



STUDY IX

Hope and Vision

1. Texts

Consider the following verses from the Bible:

- a) *Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.*

Matt. 6:10

- b) *If our hope in Christ is for this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.*

1 Cor. 15:19

- c) *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth disappeared, and the sea vanished.... I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne: "Now God's home is with mankind! He will live with them, and they shall be his people.... The peoples of the world will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their wealth to it. The gates of the city will stand open all day; they will never be closed, because there will be no night there. The greatness and the wealth of the nations will be brought into the city..."*

Rev. 21:1, 3, 24-26

- d) *I consider that what we suffer at this present time cannot be compared at all with the glory that is going to be revealed to us ... yet there was the hope that creation itself would one day be set free from its slavery to decay and would share the glorious freedom of the children of God.*

Rom. 8:18, 20, 21

2. Comment

Each of these biblical texts deals with different aspects of the Christian vision and hope. In the prayer that Jesus taught us, we ask for the reign of God to come here on earth and for God's will to be done here as in heaven. And yet in the Corinthian passage St Paul reminds us that our faith in Christ is not for this earthly life only, but also for what lies beyond. In the passage from the Book of Revelation we encounter the hope of a total transformation of the created order. Here hope is expressed in terms of a life in God for the whole human race. The greatness

and wealth of the nations are brought to the feet of God in whose light all peoples walk.

St Paul expresses this same sentiment when he speaks of the sufferings of the present time as not worth comparing with the glory that is to come. For in his expression of hope the whole creation awaits with eager longing to share the glorious freedom of the children of God!

From these texts, it seems evident that no simple "this-worldly/other-worldly" distinction can do justice to our hope. It is God's kingdom that we await here on earth and yet its full realization has dimensions that are yet to be revealed. Christian hope is thus "active waiting" (John Wesley).

Now let us look at the way some others have expressed their hope :

- a) In the following Sikh text there is an expression of hope in terms of unity with God, which liberates the person from bondages that limit one's relationship with other people and with God:

*My heart is full of Him, this vision I have realized through the Guru.
I regard everybody as my friend, and am the well-wisher of all men.
The Lord has destroyed the pangs of separation and united me unto Himself.
The perverse mentality has been destroyed.
It rains nectar now, and the world of the Guru tastes sweet.
I have seen Ram, who pervades waters and deserts and fills both the earth and the heaven.*

Dhanasari, Guru vi, 4.3, *The Sikhs and Their Scriptures*,
C.H. Loehlin, The Lucknow Publishing House, 1964, pp.47-48.

- b) In the following text, however, we see another understanding of ultimate hope. In Confucian thought the "full realization", "self-transformation" or the "fulfilment of the human person" constitutes that hope:

One's calling, as it were, is none other than the inner voice that enjoins one to become what one ought to be. This critical self-awareness, informed by one's openness to an ever-expanding circle of human relatedness, is the authentic access to one's proper destiny... We must transcend what we existentially are, so that we can become what we ontologically are destined to be. We need not depart from our selfhood and our humanity to become fully realized. Indeed, it is through a deepening and broadening awareness of ourselves as humans that we serve Heaven... To be religious, in the Confucian sense, is to be engaged in ultimate self-transformation as a communal act. Salvation means the full realization of the anthropocosmic reality inherent in our human nature.

Tu Wei-ming, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation*, Albany, New York, State University of New York Press, 1985, pp.62-64.

- c) In the following quotation the conviction is expressed that aspects of Marxism can enrich the Christian hope:

Marxism can give social reality and substance to the concrete, historical expressions of religious hope. Marx exposed illusory hopes. This activity

constituted his negative task. He particularly assailed the understandings of religious hopes that were simply and purely "other worldly". He showed how a hope that is simply and purely "other worldly" functions to leave the present order of life as it is. Such a hope ceases to be critical of the present order. It accepts the injustice and bondage of that order. It no longer troubles itself with "worldly" matters.

Naturally, those who benefit from the present order of things are going to have a lot at stake in selling people on a purely "other worldly" understanding of Christian hope. Marx exposed this fact — that an ultimate religious hope without a concrete social hope is empty and, finally, phony

Marx has taught me that it is not enough simply to talk about liberation or peace or reconciliation. I must also identify the real forces working for changes in my situation and become a part of those forces. Otherwise, I am not engaged in living out the hope for liberation and wholeness and peace for all (hu)man-kind which finds expression in the ultimate religious hope.

Thomas W. Ogletree, "What May Man Really Hope For?"
in *From Hope to Liberation: Towards a New Marxist Christian Dialogue*, eds Nicholas Picdiscalzi and Robert E. Thobaben,
Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1974, pp.44,47.

- d) From a multilateral dialogue between people of five religious communities comes the following, which says that people of different religious traditions do share deeply in some common hope and vision :

In our dialogue we spoke from the standpoint of our own religious and cultural traditions, and we listened carefully to one another. We came to understand more clearly where we differ. But we also discovered where we converge and can affirm basic values and hopes together as religious people, not at the "lowest common denominator" but at the very heart of our deepest commitments and convictions.

We share an affirmation of the fullness and the deep inter-relatedness of all life — human life to life, human life to the life of the world of nature, and all life to its divine source. Native Americans speak of the "Great circle of creation", and Hindus speak of the fullness of life "from the Creator to a blade of grass". We heard from the Bhagavad Gita :

*One who sees Me everywhere
and sees everything in me,
of him shall I never lose hold,
and he shall never lose hold of Me.*

We share an affirmation that we as human beings are not only given, but entrusted with, the gift of life. That sacred trust calls us to compassionate and responsible action, both personal and communal. In a world of unconscionable disparity between races, we feel deeply that our religious traditions commend us to pursue justice, with unceasing effort, not only on behalf of our own religious community, but for all.

The Meaning of Life, report of a multifaith consultation,
Mauritius, 25 January-3 February 1983, Geneva, WCC, p.17.

3. Discussion and questions

You might wish to continue the discussion of the last session with your partners in dialogue. Sharing our differing and intersecting visions of life together in community might lead naturally to the question of hope. What is it that we hold in hope for the future? Our hope for the future also shapes our understanding of the present. We interpret the world, with its injustice, suffering, and conflicts, as well as its joys, in the light of the biblical vision of hope for a kingdom of peace and love that God will bring to pass. Others interpret the world in the light of *their* vision of hope.

- a) What visions of the future are shared, and where do they diverge?
- b) To what extent must visions of the future be shared in order to make cooperation for a better future possible?
- c) How can we share our motivations and hopes in a way that enables us to engage in common struggles with others?
- d) In what ways do the hopes and visions of others enrich the way we have formulated our hope?

Bibliography

The following are some publications that take up the underlying issues of this study for discussion and comment. There are many others, particularly in your own region, that may be helpful to you in your discussions. Those who need a longer bibliography on any one aspect of the study should please write to: Sub-unit on Dialogue, World Council of Churches, 150 route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 20.

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2. *The Attitude of the Church Towards the Followers of Other Religions*, Secretariat Pro Non Christianis, Città del Vaticano, 1984, 22pp.
- ✓ 3. Samarth, S.J., *Courage for Dialogue: Ecumenical Issues in Inter-Religious Relationships*, Geneva, WCC, 1981, 160pp.
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Note on the Global Statistics of World Religions:

Christians: 32.4%
 Muslims: 17.1%
 Hindus: 13.7%
 Buddhists: 6.2%
 Jews: 0.4%

Source: *World Christian Encyclopedia*, ed. David B. Barrett, London, Oxford University Press, 1982, p.6.

Illustrations

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USE GUIDE FOR
THE CHURCH IN HISTORY

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USE GUIDE FOR
**THE
CHURCH
IN HISTORY**

Prepared by Victor Judson Schramm,
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Introduction

This Use Guide has two major purposes: to help you read John Booty's book *The Church in History*; and to suggest ways in which you might use the book as a basis for group discussion of the issues which it raises and of the themes which it touches. This Use Guide is not a literal report and analysis of how the book has been used in such discussion groups. It is meant to provide you with a beginning—a place from which to start a creative venture in learning and increased Christian awareness. The things that you can learn are limited only by how much you are willing to venture.

In addition to some guidance for individual use, three models are proposed for group use: six 45-minute sessions, six hour-and-a-half sessions, and a weekend retreat. In any given group of people, some will read the book agreed upon and some will not. It is assumed that if you are the leader of a group you will have read the book. The book is central although not indispensable to a discussion of the issue it addresses—the importance of history and its relation to self- and corporate identity. Although the purpose of this Use Guide is not to tell you what to believe and what conclusions you should reach, the very fact that it has been written in a certain way and from a particular point of view involves an interpretation on the part of the author. It will have been a good and valid interpretation if it makes your learning experience richer.

2 THE CHURCH IN HISTORY

Another valuable aid to the person planning an experience in adult education has been published as part of this series of Use Guides. It is called *Equipping God's People: A Basic Guide for Adult Education*. It presents in clear and direct language the ideas and methods of Christian educators today. It also includes an annotated bibliography of books in the field of adult education with emphasis on Christian education—including books on the philosophy and method of adult education. It is an invaluable tool for planning an involvement with any of the Use Guides to the Church's Teaching Series.

Part One

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

Perhaps you have never read any church history before and are a little diffident about doing so now. Be reassured that the author supposes an intelligent reader, but one with no background in the subject. On the other hand, reading this book is not quite like reading a novel, and you certainly will have to "work" through the book. When you read material in a field which is unfamiliar, you might consider reading a little more slowly than usual. A chair that helps you sit up and be alert might be better than one you can sink back into. Why not divide the book into units which can be read in a sitting, and take them one at a time at the same time of day? The book is divided into six chapters of substantial but not impossible size. Perhaps you will want to go through the book in six days, perhaps in six weeks; your own schedule and inclinations will have to be your guide. If you are lucky enough to have speed-reading skills, you might read the book through quickly and then go back and tackle it chapter by chapter.

There are many good reasons for wanting to read a book about church history; it may increase the benefit of the exercise if you make clear to yourself why you are reading this one. Simple curiosity about the subject is a very good reason,

perhaps in the long run the best. Church history is an endlessly fascinating field and this book is an excellent place to start. Perhaps you are taking on some serious reading as a Lenten discipline. Church history is a serious and noble study, which (as you will discover) provides examples of life in every age and cultural idiom, inspirational and suitable for emulation. Perhaps your pastor has told you that it would be good for you to have a look at a volume in the Church's Teaching Series, and you're doing this to please him or her. Your pastor is right, it will be good for you.

It is also a good idea to ask yourself what you hope to get out of reading this book. Since there is to be no final examination at the end of the course or anything like that, the accumulation of historical data need not be your major goal, although facts are the material of history and in their absence history becomes mere conjecture or fiction. In addition, if you are reading this book with an eye toward leading discussion groups based on it, you will find that the more specific data you retain, the better able you will be to answer the questions which inevitably arise and the more comfortable you will feel in your role as leader. But some people retain this kind of information more easily than others. If you do not retain information easily, don't worry about it too much; you can't expect to master a whole field of learning by reading a single book. Still, the more we know and understand about the past the less likely we are to be the captives of it, whether in our personal lives or as the inheritors of places in community; and this understanding can be aided by the disciplined study of history.

Here are a number of suggestions to guide your reflection on each of the chapters in the book. You might also take into account, in your own analysis of the book and its potential use with a group, the purpose and use of the pictures and maps that appear in the volume. It is hoped that the pictures will make the biographical sections more vivid for you. Notice how personal style has changed over the course of centuries. The cultural contexts of these various styles differ as greatly. Whenever you encounter a place name in your reading, you should try to find it on a map; to locate events

in their physical settings will likewise make them more vivid. Notice in how small an area Christian history takes place (up to the Renaissance, anyway) in comparison with the scale of events in the modern world.

STUDY GUIDE FOR CHAPTER 1

In this introductory chapter the author explains in a clear way his assumptions about the nature and importance of studying history, as well as his prejudices as a church historian, and he lays out the plan of the work. You will find it very valuable to read and reread this chapter, keeping in mind what Booty says as you read the rest of the book. The chief assumption made, one which is basic to my personal understanding of the Gospel, is that history has meaning, and that this meaning is conveyed in and through the events of history. In order to make the importance of history vivid and personal, try the following exercises.

- Select from your past a peak experience. Perhaps it will be a very sad one, the death of someone close to you; perhaps it will be a joyous one, a conversion experience, or falling in love; perhaps it will be an uncomfortable one, such as illness or an accident. The main thing is that it have strong emotions associated with it. Empty your mind of present concerns as much as you can. Try to recall the emotions as you recall the facts of the experience and relive them again. (This is the kind of exercise actors use when they are calling up emotions to play a scene.) As the emotions represent themselves to you, notice the difference between memory and present experience. Once you have relived the experience, ask yourself how you now differ from your past self. Would you react similarly to the same situation now?

- On the basis of the same recall experience, ask yourself how the circumstances of your life were affected. Did you change directions in any way in the short run? In the long run?

- This last exercise is something to give preliminary consideration to now, to think about as you continue reading the

book, and to meditate on when you've finished. Take the topics of the four central chapters of the book and apply them to your own life (keeping in mind that their reference is to the whole Christian community and not the individual): essential nature or character; ability to change and adapt; relationship to the outside world; mission or purpose in life. How does your personal history affect the way you identify yourself? How do you maintain faithfulness to your highest ideals? What does your past have to do with the way you react to the people you meet? How has your past shaped what you think you ought to be doing with your life? Each individual brings a personal history to every community of which they are members; and the communal history is shaped by the accumulated personal histories. And personal histories are, in turn, shaped by the community.

STUDY GUIDE FOR CHAPTER 2

In the next four chapters each topic is discussed in three sections: a biography of a person who in some sense typifies what he is talking about; some remarks on the point he is making; and a chronological survey of the background of his point. In this chapter he discusses the essential nature of the church as an Anglican conceives it.

The Biography

The New Testament writings and the letters of Ignatius of Antioch constitute the largest part of the documentary evidence for the development of primitive Christianity into catholic Christianity. Ignatius's letters are extraordinarily vivid, well worth reading in a translation such as that of Cyril Richardson in *Early Christian Fathers*. What sort of character emerges from this presentation of him? Try to imagine Ignatius as the pastor of a persecuted community. What are his chief concerns as he approaches death? In what ways do you find him attractive? In what ways repellent? What can you tell about the structure of the church and the quality of

relationships within it? In what ways is Ignatius's community like the diocese in which you reside? In what ways like your parish? In what ways unlike either one?

The Organizing Principle

Read the Catechism in the new Prayer Book. How is the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral reflected in it? Read the Historical Documents of the church. How do you interpret the inclusion of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral among them? How does each point of the Quadrilateral—the Scriptures, the creeds, the sacraments, the historic episcopate—touch upon your life? Which touch you more closely? Which are more remote?

Historical Survey

Notice how the tradition of the Episcopal Church is traced: from the English church, the western church, the early church. What makes our tradition distinctive today? How are we like the Roman Church? How are we like the various Protestant denominations with which you are familiar? How does the author's picture of the medieval church differ from his survey of the patristic period? How does the English church differ from the churches on the continent of Europe at that time? How did the Episcopal Church adapt to post-revolutionary conditions in America? Do you agree with the author (and the bishops at Lambeth) that the centrality of the four points of the Quadrilateral can be discerned throughout Christian history?

STUDY GUIDE FOR CHAPTER 3

In this chapter the ways in which the church has renewed and reformed itself in different times and places is discussed, and how it has dealt with the problem of its increasing distance from the original preaching of the Gospel.

The Biography

Cranmer is clearly one of the key figures in the development of what would come to be Anglicanism; all of our Prayer Books owe him much. Consider Cranmer's relations with Henry, Edward, and Mary and his actions during their reigns. What does this tell you about his personality? What does his behavior suggest to you about the nature of the English Reformation?

The Organizing Principle

Booby presents reform and renewal as a constant factor in the life of the church, both in the discipline which it urges upon its members and in the way in which it adjusts its corporate structures, practices, and attitudes. What means do you use for the reform of your own life? What is the meaning of corporate acts of confession and forgiveness such as at the Eucharist or Morning Prayer? How do these acts relate to individual ways of dealing with guilt? How do you approach amendment of life? When you feel the need of renewal, what is the nature of the standard you feel you have fallen short of? Look at the baptismal service in the new Prayer Book. How does it talk about reform and renewal in the individual? What place does the community have in individual renewal? How are questions of renewal and reform involved in the controversy over the ordination of women? Over Prayer Book revision?

Historical Survey

How are martyrdom and monasticism connected? What are the social conditions in which monasticism grew? Both Augustine and Pelagius address the problem of a church become prosperous in a changing world. How do their concerns differ? How do Gregory and Francis differ in their responses to restoring the integrity of the Christian life? How do Luther and Erasmus differ in temperament? How are politics and theology united in the English Reformation? How is the English Reformation different from the Continental Ref-

ormation? What did the Church of England lack that the Methodist movement sought to restore? Why do you suppose that revivalism, which characterizes so much of American religion, has not been a very significant factor among Episcopalians? How do the reform movements which Booby mentions, Evangelicalism, Anglo-Catholicism, and Liberalism, fulfill some of the same functions among us? Do you see any signs of change in the response of Episcopalians to enthusiastic religion?

STUDY GUIDE FOR CHAPTER 4

In this chapter the author explores the ways in which the holy community has related to the larger community and suggests what he sees as the correct way for them to be related.

The Biography

Notice what we read about Maurice's private life, his devotional life. How does this inform his public positions? How does Maurice distinguish between the church and the world? How does he conceive the church's task in relation to the world? What part does his idea of sacrifice play in this? How does Maurice differ from his socialist colleagues in method? In aims and goals?

The Organizing Principle

Consider the five ways in which church and world are related according to Niebuhr's typology. Which of them do you see at work in the relation between church and world in our own day? Christianity began its life as a persecuted minority on the fringes of the Hellenistic world. As a Christian in the modern world do you ever feel that you stand over against that world? In what ways? In what programs of a social action or social service sort does your parish engage? Or your diocese? Are these programs undertaken in isolation from or in cooperation with secular groups and agencies? Do you make

your reasons for engaging (or not engaging) in such programs explicit?

Historical Survey

Now that you have had the data presented to you in several different contexts, you are probably beginning to have a picture of what the early church was like (and the medieval, Reformation, and modern churches as well). Given what you know, can you account for the violence of the Roman government's initial reaction to the church? In what ways was the recognition of the church in the fourth century to the church's advantage? In what ways to its disadvantage? How does the coronation of Charlemagne typify the tension which the middle ages felt between church and world? How does the doctrine of the separation of church and state begin to emerge in the Renaissance? How is it seen in colonial America? How did the Social Gospel movement attempt to bridge that separation? Do you see the thought of F. D. Maurice as applicable to the church's present circumstances?

STUDY GUIDE FOR CHAPTER 5

In this chapter the nature of mission and the relationship between mission and renewal and reform are discussed.

The Biography

In what ways does Brent's life justify the statement that he was typical of "the emerging twentieth century"? How does he differ from the subjects of the other biographies you have been reading? Consider the five principles for missionaries which Brent lays down. Can you discern the operation of these principles in his life? How does his missionary activity relate to his ecumenical activity?

The Organizing Principle

How does the book view the relation between the mission of Christ and the missionary activity of the church? In what

missionary endeavors does your parish or diocese engage? Is the field of such endeavors foreign or domestic? How do you see the relation between mission and social action or service projects?

Historical Survey

What factors facilitated the expansion of Christianity throughout Europe? What factors inhibited it? During the period of European colonial expansion, in what ways were missionaries a mitigating factor? In what ways did they contribute to the dissolution of native cultures? How does the author account for the reversal of the great Protestant mission? How do recent activities differ from those of the past? How is a united church a more effective instrument of mission?

STUDY GUIDE FOR CHAPTER 6

In this chapter Booty sums up what he has been telling us. In the first part of the chapter he reviews how the four issues around which the four central chapters have been centered have operated in the lives and thought of the subjects of his biographies. In the second part of the chapter he introduces us to Janani Luwum the recently martyred East African bishop. The accounts of his martyrdom, which most of us read in the newspapers, were extraordinarily vivid and terrifying in their starkness. Can you imagine yourself making this kind of witness?

Part Two

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Now that you have read *The Church in History* you are in a position to help others come to terms with the material which it covers and issues which it raises. You have been asked to lead a discussion group centered around the book. The first step is to read the book again, perhaps twice more, from the point of view of sharing it with others. When other people are looking to you for guidance you will want to be as well prepared as possible. On the other hand, your effectiveness in a group study project like this will depend, not so much on your expertise in church history, as it will on your general capacity as a leader. If people know you and trust you as a leader in other contexts in your parish, they may well follow you in this context. In fact, your not being a professional church historian or other kind of teacher may be a positive advantage. People will not be anxious that the experience might be too much like school.

The role of leader in these discussion groups should be that of initiator and helper. But even if you are not representing yourself as an authority on the subject, you must still be prepared to make enough basic decisions about the running of the group so that people feel they have a secure structure in which to proceed. At any moment during the course of group

discussion you must be prepared to steer the conversation into the most fruitful channels possible. It is the leader's task to make decisions in situations where people cannot make them for themselves. This is a delicate problem: if you don't exercise enough control the discussion will wander so far that people will become restless; if you exercise too much control, you will kill the spontaneous digressions which are often part of real learning. In the group which you lead you will have to decide (or let people tell you) which side of this fine line you are on.

The purpose of this second part of the Use Guide is to provide you with three different models for structuring discussion groups based on *The Church in History*. The first model gives plans for six forty-five-minute sessions and does not demand outside preparation from the participants. The second model gives plans for six hour-and-a-half sessions and expects somewhat greater commitment from the participants. Both plans will demand equal diligence on the leader's part. The third model suggests how material from the book can be used as the focus of a weekend retreat.

There are two things to remember as a "teacher." First, you will never learn a subject so well as when you have to teach it. Second, even if you are not a real expert on the subject, you can still help students if you are at least a chapter ahead of them.

FIRST MODEL SIX FORTY-FIVE-MINUTE SESSIONS

There are several contexts in which this model could be used. It would serve as an adult Sunday morning class; it would work, say, with an established parish group which is accustomed to meet for a mid-week Eucharist, lunch, and program; and it would also work as an educational component in a Lenten program. Since it would be intended to include as many members of the congregation or sub-group of the congregation as possible, you couldn't depend on everyone reading

the book; in fact, maybe only you will have done so. In short-term, low-commitment situations you might consider a series of discussions based on the themes of the book, initiated by you with material from the book. These would be discussions in which participants would be asked to contribute their thoughts and feelings on the topic. Thus the book becomes the structure of the series and the resource material for the leader. The setting for these discussions could be almost anywhere: a room with easy chairs where people may have been drinking coffee (and may well continue to do so), a table around which people have just eaten a meal, or a church school classroom. You will want a blackboard or newsprint to write on. This model could work with as many as twenty-four or thirty-six participants, but a dozen would be better; if the group is very large, you will inevitably look like a lecturer and you will probably find it difficult to encourage discussion.

Session 1: Introduction

If people do not know each other let them introduce themselves first. It is essential that they know something about each other. Do everything possible to establish a warm, friendly, inviting environment. Next, introduce the book and explain its relationship to the discussion series in which they are participating (although it will no doubt have been mentioned in the advertising). Urge as many of the participants as possible to read the book, assuring them that not only is the book good in itself and that you enjoyed it, but also that reading it will increase the benefits of their discussion.

Explain that the next four sessions will be centered around four themes: the essential nature of the church, renewal and reform, the relationship between the church and the rest of the world, and mission. This should take fifteen or twenty minutes. Finally, spend the rest of the session in an emotional memory exercise like the one suggested in part one. You will have to explain that this is an exercise designed to make vivid the importance of history, and then show them

what you mean by sharing such a memory with them. You may not want to share the one you first thought of, and might choose one specially for a public context. Describe the circumstances of the experience; describe the emotions you associate with the experience as vividly as you can; then comment on how the experience affected your character, and how that alteration showed itself in future situations. Invite other people to share an experience too.

You may well have better luck in groups whose members know each other well or with participants who know you well and trust you. Be prepared to help people structure their telling of the experience. End by suggesting that who you are has a lot to do with what you've done and what has happened to you, and that who you are affects what you will do and suffer; mention that communities like the church also have histories which deeply affect their ongoing reality.

Session 2: The Nature of the Church

Provide people with copies of the new Prayer Book and ask them to turn to the section on Historical Documents of the Church. Flip through the pages with them slowly, pointing out the wide time span which these documents show. When you get to the text of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, share with them what you know about its historical context, and ask someone to read it aloud. Then ask people to name the four items which the document sets forth and write them on your newsprint.

Spend the rest of the period trying to get people to express their reactions and relations with each of the four items. You will have to move on to a new item every five to seven minutes. If discussion is slow to start, ask people, for instance, whether they read the Bible and what they think it means; whether they listen to it being read in church; ask them whether they ever have trouble with the "I" or "We" of the creeds; ask which of the sacraments means the most to them and which the least; ask how they understand the authority of the bishop and other clergy. Write down as many responses as you can. Save five or ten minutes at the very end

to give some historical examples of how these four elements have been persistent marks of the catholic church since the time of Ignatius of Antioch. But be prepared to sacrifice your remarks to a lively discussion if one gets started.

Session 3: Renewal and Reform

The intention of this plan is to allege a connection between the renewal and reform of the individual and that of the larger body, the church, and to present renewal and reform as constant factors. Take Prayer Books and read through the baptismal liturgy, you reading the celebrant's part, the participants responding. Ask people to comment on the kind of renewal and reform which it supposes. Now do the same with the forms for the reconciliation of a penitent. Point out the distinction between the once-and-for-all character of baptism and the repeatability of auricular confession, noting that confession is in fact the church's ongoing way of dealing with our falling short of the baptismal covenant. Having made the point in the case of the individual that renewal and reform are constant tasks, spend fifteen minutes telling people about reform movements such as monasticism, the Continental Reformation, and the English Reformation, ending with Evangelicalism, Liberalism, or Anglo-Catholicism, whichever figures largest in the tradition of your own parish.

Session 4: The Church and the World

Invite people to express their views on three recent political movements and the church's involvement in them, such as the civil rights movement, the Vietnam war protest, abortion law reform, the gay rights movement—any three movements which will provoke difference of opinion in the group you are working with. Spend about ten minutes on each issue; condense people's remarks and write them on your newsprint. Point out that disagreement on the correct relationship between the church and the rest of the world is currently widespread and that this relationship has worked out variously in different historical contexts, using whatever examples spring readily to mind. Then read them the full account of Niebuhr's five types of relationship between Christ and cul-

ture. Ask them to comment first on what you have just read and finally to comment again on the three cases with which the session began.

Session 5: Mission

Begin by mentioning the various missionary enterprises in which the Episcopal Church has engaged in recent years which the participants may know about—Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence in the Body of Christ (MRI), the General Convention Special Program, and now Venture in Mission (VIM). Contribute what you can about the historical background of these programs. Try to get people to say what they think about these programs. Note the distinction between foreign and domestic missions. Ask people to comment on the various social action or social service projects in which your own parish and diocese may be engaged. Ask people why they think the church engages in such activity and make Booty's point about the mission of Christ. After about thirty minutes, shift the conversation to the Ecumenical Movement, first explaining its historical connection with missions. Ask what significance the Ecumenical Movement has in people's lives and how it may be seen as increasing the effectiveness of the mission of the church.

Session 6: Conclusion

Read to the participants the stark account of the martyrdom of Janani Luwum. Stress as the book does the way in which Luwum sums up the themes with which the series has dealt, and invite people to comment. Be sure there is time to discuss anything left over from previous sessions.

SECOND MODEL SIX HOUR-AND-A-HALF SESSIONS

This model is intended for use in situations where a substantial amount of effort can be expected from participants and

where all or most of them can be expected to exercise the function of leader. These sessions could be useful in the course of training lay readers or (adult) acolytes or visitors. You might want to invite people to participate who have been regularly attending Christian education class for a while. Perhaps it would be possible to gather a more or less stable group which might meet for a year and work through several of the volumes in the Church's Teaching Series. At any rate, this design supposes that the necessity of reading the book will have been part of the advertising for the series. This design also supposes that some people at least will have read the first chapter in preparation for the first session. The more intensive nature of this model makes it desirable that the group number not much more than twelve. Meet in a room around a table, since you will have books and papers to refer to; you will need a blackboard or newsprint. These sessions are conceived of as being without a break.

Although the last session will be structured somewhat differently, the first five sessions will each have three components: a report (or reports) on a chapter of the book; discussion of the chapter; discussion of the issue which the chapter deals with. Each part is conceived of as half an hour, although you may very well want to adjust the time according to the specific needs of the group you are leading. People should bring their books with them to each meeting.

- The first component consists in a chapter summary so that the basis for subsequent discussion is clear. For the first session you as a leader will want to present the material. But at the beginning of the first session, as you are explaining the design of the series (a session on each chapter of the book) and the structure of the sessions (three components to each session), go around the table and ask people to take responsibility for reporting on a chapter or part of a chapter. Perhaps the group will be small enough to allow each person to report on a whole chapter; perhaps one person will report on the biography and organizing principle and another on the historical survey. If there are people who don't want to do this, don't push them. Some people will be able to do this easily and unaided; but the rest will look to you for help. Perhaps

this Use Guide will be helpful to them. Perhaps you will want to meet with the person sometime before the session to help him or her focus their remarks and to ease whatever nervousness they might feel. This means of course that you will have to do a summary (at least mentally) for every chapter; you will also have to fill in if there are any hitches along the way, or if someone drops out of the group or has to be absent. The advantage of this approach lies in the fact that many people will have an opportunity to try their hand in a leadership position. It will mean more work for you than if you just did it yourself; but the rewards of working on a one-to-one basis are very great. During the delivery of the report you should be prepared to correct only in the case of gravest error or misinformation. The other participants have read the chapter themselves and may well have their own opinions.

- Make it clear to the person who is reporting for each session that you hope for his or her active involvement in the discussion which follows, both with questions and answers. The discussion should, for this component, remain as close to the text of the book as possible. Probably you and the reporter for the session can come up with questions which will elicit lively discussion from participants. Here are some suggestions for each chapter.

Chapter 1: How are Booty's self-limitations (20th century, American, male, Episcopalian, seminary teacher, English Renaissance scholar) reflected in this chapter? In the design of this book? **Chapter 2:** How are the points of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral reflected in the thought of Ignatius? (Pay close attention to the quotes which are given.) How were the integrity of these points maintained during the English Reformation? How did the Episcopal Church in America deal with its loss of episcopal government as a result of the American Revolution? **Chapter 3:** How does Cranmer react to each of the three sovereigns under whom he served? How is Cranmer's behavior typical of the English Reformation? Of the English church? Discuss the personalities of Luther and Erasmus. Which was more influential in England? Why? **Chapter 4:** How do Maurice's goals differ from those of his other socialist colleagues? How does the social situation of the

medieval church differ from that of the church in our own times? How do they differ in their relationship to power? **Chapter 5:** Discuss the relationship between Brent's missionary activity and his ecumenical interests. (Again, notice the quotations which are provided.) How is Brent typical of the 20th century? How do you relate the mission of the church to the mission of Christ? You may discover that an in-depth discussion of one question may take as much time as you want to spend; you probably won't find time to discuss questions relative to every period for every session. The point is to talk history and adduce as much detail as you are able. Encourage people to consult the book during the sessions, paying special attention to the wealth of primary source material in which the book abounds.

- The last component is meant to consist in the exercises proposed in the first model. You will have to adapt them somewhat both as regards time and as regards the leader's role. With a group of people who have all read the book and at least one other person well-prepared you probably won't have to indicate the point of the exercise quite as strongly as is sometimes necessary with a group that hasn't. A careful study and discussion of the historical material will produce a deeper and more informed response to the issues which the book raises.

As for the sixth session, use the same procedure as in the first model to read and discuss the account of the martyrdom of Janani Luwum; but in discussing how Luwum sums up the themes of the book you may expect people to be able to bring in examples of the theme from other periods.

THIRD MODEL A WEEKEND RETREAT OR QUIET DAY

It may be that what's wanted in your parish is a weekend study group which compresses the six sessions of one of the previous models (or something in between) into a weekend at a diocesan conference center. This could be done. But let

me suggest that the biographical portions of *The Church in History* (including all of chapter 6) could very effectively serve as the focus for meditation at a retreat or quiet day. Silence is a context for self-knowledge and for knowledge of God; most of us learn about ourselves and about God in the context of active and busy lives. Periods of silence (which need to be structured externally for those of us with little practice in it) can be cleansing and refreshing experiences; one hopes for a better understanding of what one must go back and do.

Your role as leader of a retreat or quiet day would be to read the selections. You will find that the volume reads as if it were meant to be spoken aloud; but you must rehearse several times and more (at least once with someone listening) if people are to get the most from the experience. Remember to speak more slowly than you think you need to. Lively but not stagey is what to aim for. The setting, of course, will affect how you read—whether you are reading from a lectern in church, or in a dining room or common room. The greater your distance from your audience the bigger you need to make your “performance.”

But most important of all is to remember your goal for yourself and your group: to give people room to be silent and meditate on the living of a Christian life.

WEEKEND RETREAT: SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Friday evening (after dinner): Ignatius
 Saturday morning: Cranmer
 Saturday noon (during lunch): Maurice
 Saturday afternoon: Brent
 Saturday evening (after dinner): Chapter 6
 Sunday morning: Eucharist or Morning Prayer

(Observe silence from after dinner on Friday until after church on Sunday morning.)

QUIET DAY: SAMPLE SCHEDULE

9 a.m. Coffee
 9:30 a.m. Ignatius

10:30 a.m. Cranmer
 12 Noon Maurice (during lunch)
 2 p.m. Brent
 3 p.m. Chapter 6
 4 p.m. Coming together for refreshments and sharing of experiences

(Observe silence from after coffee until the final coming together.)

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A LIFE OF LEARNING

Peter Brown

Charles Homer Haskins
Lecture for 2003



American Council of Learned Societies

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The Charles Homer Haskins Lecture

Charles Homer Haskins (1870–1937), for whom the ACLS lecture series is named, was the first Chairman of the American Council of Learned Societies, from 1920 to 1926. He began his teaching career at the Johns Hopkins University, where he received the B.A. degree in 1887, and the Ph.D. in 1890. He later taught at the University of Wisconsin and at Harvard, where he was Henry Charles Lea Professor of Medieval History at the time of his retirement in 1931, and Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences from 1908 to 1924. He served as president of the American Historical Association in 1922, and was a founder and the second president of the Medieval Academy of America in 1926.

A great American teacher, Charles Homer Haskins also did much to establish the reputation of American scholarship abroad. His distinction was recognized in honorary degrees from Strasbourg, Padua, Manchester, Paris, Louvain, Caen, Harvard, Wisconsin, and Allegheny College, where in 1883 he had begun his higher education at the age of thirteen.

Previous Haskins Lecturers

- 1983 Maynard Mack
- 1984 Mary Rosamond Haas
- 1985 Lawrence Stone
- 1986 Milton V. Anastos
- 1987 Carl E. Schorske
- 1988 John Hope Franklin
- 1989 Judith N. Shklar
- 1990 Paul Oskar Kristeller
- 1991 Milton Babbitt
- 1992 Donald W. Meinig
- 1993 Annemarie Schimmel
- 1994 Robert K. Merton
- 1995 Phyllis Pray Bober
- 1996 Robert William Fogel
- 1997 Natalie Zemon Davis
- 1998 Yi-Fu Tuan
- 1999 Clifford Geertz
- 2000 Geoffrey Hartman
- 2001 Helen Vendler
- 2002 Henry A. Millon

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CLAREMONT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
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Brief Biography

Peter Brown was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1935. In 1956, he received his B.A. from Oxford, and was a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, 1956–1975. He was Professor of History at Royal Holloway College, University of London from 1975–1978 and then Professor of Classics and History at the University of California, Berkeley from 1978–1986. Since 1986, Professor Brown has been at Princeton University.

Brown's principal concern is the rise of Christianity and the transition from the ancient to the early medieval world. He is the author of *Augustine of Hippo* (Faber, 1967; University of California Press, 1968; 2nd ed. 2000), *The World of Late Antiquity* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (Harper & Row, 1972), *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Harvard University Press, 1978), *The Cult of the Saints* (University of Chicago Press, 1981), *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (University of California Press, 1982), *The Body and Society* (Columbia University Press, 1988), *Power and Persuasion* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), *Authority and the Sacred* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), *The Rise of Western Christendom: 200–1000 AD* (Blackwell Publishers, 1996; 2nd ed. 2003), *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* (University Press of New England, 2002). He is currently working on the problems of wealth, poverty, and care of the poor in late antiquity.

Distinguished throughout the world, Professor Brown has received Honorary Degrees at Fribourg, Switzerland (1974), the University of Chicago (1978), Trinity College, Dublin (1990), Wesleyan University (1993), Tulane University (1994), Royal Holloway College, University of London (1996), the University of Pisa (2001), Columbia University (2001) and Harvard University (2002).

Brown is a Fellow of the British Academy, the Royal Historical Society, the American Society of Arts and Sciences, the American

Philosophical Society, the Medieval Academy of America, the Royal Netherlands Academy, and the Academia de Bones Artes, Barcelona. He has received the Arts Council of Great Britain Award (1967), a MacArthur Fellowship (1982), the Ralph Waldo Emerson Award (1989), the Vursell Award (1990), the Heineken Prize, Amsterdam (1994), the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Lettres et des Arts (1996), and an Andrew Mellon Fellowship (2002). Professor Brown also held an ACLS Fellowship in 1980–1981.

Introduction

On the evening of May 9, 2003, I was delighted to welcome Delegates and Presidents of Learned Societies, Administrative Officers, representatives from our college and university associates, ACLS Fellows, and distinguished guests and friends to the Charles Homer Haskins Lecture and to introduce Professor Peter Brown. The active participle in the title of this Lecture Series, "A Life of Learning," is a splendid reminder that the excitement and pleasures of scholarship lie in the process of ongoing investigation and discovery. We all stand to benefit from Peter Brown's commitment to that ideal.

When John William Ward became President of the ACLS in 1982, he sought to commemorate the ACLS tradition of active engagement in scholarship and teaching of the highest quality with an annual lecture. Each year since, we have asked the lecturer:

... to reflect on a lifetime of work as a scholar, on the motives, the chance determinations, the satisfactions (and the dissatisfactions) of the life of learning, to explore through one's own life the larger, institutional life of scholarship. We do not wish the speaker to present the products of one's own scholarly research, but rather to share with other scholars the personal process of a particular lifetime of learning.

Peter Brown's lecture was the twenty-first in this series, which is named for Charles Homer Haskins, the first chairman of ACLS. It is the responsibility of the Executive Committee of the Delegates of ACLS to nominate each year's Haskins Lecturer. After searching deliberations, the delegates fixed firmly and enthusiastically on Professor Brown as a scholar whose many accomplishments over a distinguished career tangibly express the values that we share.

"He is one of very few scholars now alive who have, in effect, invented a field of study," wrote an eminent scholar nominating Peter Brown to be the Haskins Lecturer. That field, the "burgeoning

one of late antique studies," has since become "an expanding galaxy of scholarship in history, religion, literature and much more for which Brown's work provided the initiating Big Bang, and in which he continues to function as a benevolent and generous Providence." Before "Brown's Big Bang," late antiquity, the period between 250 and 800 C.E., was viewed through the lens provided by Edward Gibbon, which saw a half millennium of Decline And Fall plunging the Western World into a darkness unrelieved until the Renaissance. Peter Brown has led the way to a new understanding of a period of enduring social, cultural and religious importance. During this period Roman Law, the basis of much of contemporary jurisprudence, was codified. The Christian Church in both its Latin Catholic and Eastern forms settled on basic structures of organization and belief. The rabbinate took form in Judaism, and the Talmud was codified. Islam was founded. Peter Brown captures the sweep of these tumultuous changes and invites us to experience them. J.E. Lendon called Professor Brown's *Power and Persuasion* "one of those rare books, accessible, important, interesting, and well-written, that students of antiquity should be eager to thrust out from the dark cave of their arcane discipline and into the gaze of a wider scholarly public."

We count ourselves particularly honored that the Haskins Lecture was the second time Professor Brown had given a major address under our sponsorship. Twenty years ago, Professor Brown delivered the ACLS Lectures in the History of Religions, lectures that became *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*. Let me share with you one brief passage from the epilogue of that magnificent work. The following selection demonstrates, I feel, that Peter Brown yields nothing to Gibbon in literary mastery, yet is able to deploy historiographic precision in service of the reader's imaginary and humane understanding. Peter Brown writes:

To modern persons, whatever their religious beliefs, the Early Christian themes of sexual renunciation, of continence, celibacy, and the virgin life have come to carry with them icy overtones. The very fact that

modern Europe and America grew out of the Christian World that replaced the Roman Empire in the Middle Ages has ensured that even today, these notions still crowd in upon us, as pale, forbidding presences. Historians must bring to them their due measure of warm, red blood. By studying their precise social and religious context, the scholar can give back to these ideas a little of the human weight that they once carried in their own time. When such an offering is made, the chill shades may speak to us again, and perhaps more gently than we had thought they might, in the strange tongue of a long-lost Christianity.

We were fortunate to have Peter Brown speak to us directly from and about his life of learning on May 9, 2003, and we are pleased to bring his Haskins Lecture to a wider audience now.

—Francis Oakley, Interim President
American Council of Learned Societies

A Life of Learning

by

Peter Brown

I remember the occasion when, in 1988, I had to perform the sad duty of writing the obituary of my friend and mentor, Arnaldo Momigliano. In order to do this, I found that I had to read myself into the intellectual and academic background of the Italy in which the young Momigliano had grown up in the 1920s and 1930s. As a result, I had to study something of the life and thought of the great Neapolitan philosopher, Benedetto Croce, whose Idealist philosophy of history had played a formative role in the historical culture of Italy at that time. You can imagine my surprise when I read, in a short memoir on Croce, written by a contemporary, that, sometime around 1900, the philosopher had challenged a colleague to a duel over an issue of metaphysical philosophy. This was the sort of information which makes one turn the page. I turned the page. No further information was provided. Plainly, the author of the memoir considered that, for his readers, the event was so normal, so much part of the academic life of Naples at the turn of the century, as to require no explanation. The sentence stood there, unashamed, unglossed. It was like coming upon an entry in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*—"This year were dragons seen in the sky." I realized, with a shock, that Momigliano was a man deeply familiar to me. I had come to know and love him in Britain (his adopted homeland) from